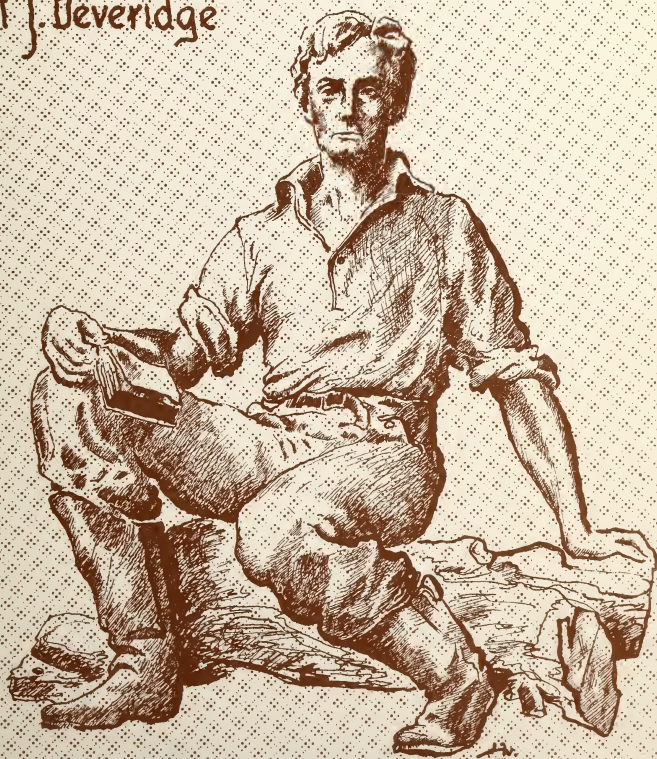


# Abe Lincoln in Indiana

by  
Albert J. Beveridge





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**Albert J. Beveridge**

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## ALBERT JEREMIAH BEVERIDGE

Although Albert Jeremiah Beveridge was not a Hoosier by birth, he lived for many years in this state. Indianians are proud of his achievements as an attorney, a statesman, and an author.

A farm in Highland County, Ohio, was his birthplace; October 6, 1862, was his birth date. The hardships and privations suffered as a youth contributed to his fine understanding of the forces which shaped Lincoln's character. Before he entered high school, he had labored as a plowboy, a railroad section hand, a logger, and a teamster. An insatiable quest for knowledge determined him to enter college. Aided by loans and by prizes won in college, he completed the requirements for his degree and graduated from Asbury College (now DePauw University) at Greencastle, Indiana, in 1885.

After his admission to the bar in 1887, Beveridge practiced law in Indianapolis for twelve years. One of the youngest men ever to be elected to the United States Senate, Beveridge took his seat as Republican senator from Indiana in 1899 at the age of thirty-six. Aligning himself with the progressive wing of the Republican party, he supported government regulation of public-service corporations, a strong navy, and conservation of national resources. He drafted the meat inspection law, which protected the health of the American people against unsanitary conditions in the meat-packing industry. Thoroughly aroused by the evils of child labor, he proposed legislation prohibiting interstate commerce in the product of factories and mines employing children under the age of fourteen years.

When bitter differences of opinion over the Payne-Aldrich Tariff Act and other issues split the Republican party in 1912, Beveridge joined Theodore Roosevelt in the formation of the Progressive or "Bull Moose" party. Beveridge, the Progressive nominee for the office of governor of Indiana, was defeated by the Democratic nominee, Samuel M. Ralston, in the election of 1912. As a candidate for the Senate in 1914, he was again defeated by his Democratic opponent, Benjamin F. Shively. Following Roosevelt's example, Beveridge rejoined the Republican party in 1916. After his defeat by the Democratic candidate, Samuel M. Ralston, in the senatorial elections of 1922, he did not again seek public office.

As an author as well as a political figure, Beveridge achieved great distinction. His method of writing was characterized by painstaking research, discriminating evaluation, and careful revision and rewriting. When tension developed between Russia and Japan, he journeyed to Russia; his personal investigation of the situation formed the basis for *THE RUSSIAN ADVANCE*, which he published in 1903.

*THE LIFE OF JOHN MARSHALL* was his magnum opus. In this work, Beveridge succeeded in communicating more than the narrative of his subject's life; a political and historical interpretation of the Supreme Court of the United States is interwoven with the threads of biography.

While the critics hailed his *MARSHALL* as an outstanding achievement, Beveridge undertook a similar biography of Abraham Lincoln. This study, also, was projected as a four-volume work. Unfortunately, when the author died on April 27, 1927, only two volumes had been completed.

## FOREWORD

Abraham Lincoln spent the formative years of his boyhood and adolescence in the wilderness of southern Indiana. The following account of these years has been reproduced from the life of the Civil War President by Albert J. Beveridge.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, 1809-1858, was well received when first published in 1928. Historical scholars, critics, and reviewers praised the author's painstaking research and realistic method. The orderly arrangement of materials, the absence of literary embellishment and psychological interpretation, and the exhaustive documentation were mentioned as outstanding characteristics of the biography.

The untimely death of the author prevented the completion of the study of Lincoln. The second chapter of the first volume has been reprinted verbatim with the kind permission of the publisher, Houghton Mifflin Company.

The Boards and the Staff of the Public Library of Fort Wayne and Allen County gratefully acknowledge the permission of the publisher. Lincoln's life in Indiana, as narrated by Beveridge, is presented in the hope that it will prove of interest to the general public.



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'WHEN, on the barren peak of some rocky hill, you catch a distant view, it generally is nothing but an undulating surface of impenetrable forest,' wrote Elias Pym Fordham in his diary, when making his way through southwestern Indiana, early in 1818. As was the case with all travellers, Fordham was depressed by the thick and sombre woods, for he complains that 'it is seldom that a view of two hundred yards in extent can be caught in Indiana,' because 'Indiana is a vast forest . . . just penetrated in places by backwoods settlers who are half hunters, half farmers.'<sup>1</sup>

Vast, forbidding, tremendous, this mighty forest stretched northward from the Ohio, its trees, like giant sentinels of nature, guarding the wilderness. Sycamore, oak, elm, willow, hackberry, poplar, sugar-maple, ash, sweet-gum, hickory, beech, walnut,<sup>2</sup> grew as thickly as their great size would permit. In 1819 Welby measured an oak in southwestern Indiana and found it to be twenty-four feet in circumference four feet above the ground; and he remarks that there were many others even larger.<sup>3</sup> Thick grapevines wove a net among the trees.<sup>4</sup>

Michaux records that, in southern Ohio a few years earlier, he measured a tulip poplar which was forty-seven feet in circumference. As late as 1833, Hugh McCulloch found Indianapolis to be a mere village 'in the heart of a magnificent forest,' and, on the road to Fort Wayne which was only an opening 'through the

<sup>1</sup> *Personal Narrative of Travels*, etc.: Elias Pym Fordham, 96, 152-3. Also see 'History of the English Settlement in Edwards Co. Ill.': George Flower, 52. *Chicago Hist. Socy. Coll.*, I.

<sup>2</sup> Dennis Hanks to Herndon, Jan. 6, 1866; Mrs. Elizabeth Crawford to same, May 3, 1866; J. W. Whartman to same, June, 1866. Weik MSS.

<sup>3</sup> 'A Visit to North America': Adlard Welby, Thwaites, XII, 230.

<sup>4</sup> 'The Journal of a Tour,' etc.: Thaddeus Mason Harris, Thwaites, III, 359. This traveller tells of grapevines 'nine inches in diameter' which 'spread a canopy over the summits of the highest trees.'



woods,' estimated that many of the trees were nearly one hundred feet in height. David Turpie records that in his boyhood the boles rose from fifty to eighty feet without a branch; and a Methodist circuit-rider testifies that in 1823 the woods in Ohio were so thick that sunlight could not get through the dense foliage.<sup>1</sup> As late as 1850 the country near Logansport, Indiana, as described by a resident, was 'nothing but woods, woods, woods, as far as the world extends!' <sup>2</sup>

In 1816 these forests were full of animals — raccoon, squirrel, opossum, skunk, deer, bear, wolf, wildcat, panther. Wild turkeys ran through underbrush filled with grouse and quail; wild ducks and geese flew overhead. Incredible numbers of pigeons hid the sun, 'darkening the air like a thick passing cloud' and, when settling for the night, broke down stout branches of trees. Swarms of mosquitoes rose from dank, stagnant pools and noisome swamps; large black and poisonous yellow flies abounded. Innumerable frogs rasped the stillness.<sup>3</sup>

The advancing tide of settlement had poured more than five hundred thousand people into Kentucky and nearly as many into Ohio; and the overflow had deposited in small and scattered communities, chiefly lying on the rivers, some sixty-four thousand persons. With this population Indiana was about to be admitted to the Union when Thomas Lincoln landed at the farm of Francis Posey.<sup>4</sup> Fewer people had penetrated this sec-

<sup>1</sup> Michaux: Thwaites, III, 175; *Men and Measures of Half a Century*, Hugh McCulloch, 70-1, 79; *Sketches of my Own Times*: David Turpie, 19. Also *Early Indiana Trials*; *Sketches*: O. H. Smith, 79; *Reminiscences of Levi Coffin*, 81-2. See especially *Pioneer History of Indiana*: William M. Cockrum; *A Western Pioneer*: Rev. Alfred Brunson, I, 276-8. See also *Some Recollections of my Boyhood*: Brandon L. Harris, 31-2.

<sup>2</sup> *In my Youth*: Robert Dudley, 8.

<sup>3</sup> Hanks to Herndon, March 22, 1866; David Turnham to same, Feb. 21, 1866. Also Hanks's Chicago and Charleston statements. Weik MSS. *Sketches of Things and People in Indiana*: Rev. Aaron Wood, 11; 'Two Years Residence': John Woods, Thwaites, x, 249; Faux's 'Journal,' Thwaites, xi, 236-7; Hulme's 'Journal,' July 5, 1819, near French Lick, Indiana, Thwaites, x, 63; Brunson, I, 276-8; Hanks to Herndon, May 4, 1866. Weik MSS. See especially Cockrum, 427-57, 504, 506.

<sup>4</sup> Francis Posey had, April 17, 1811, entered land in Township 5 S., Range 4 W. and section 29, a township later to be named Huff. A ferry from Kentucky to Anderson Creek, Indiana, is known to have been in existence before Lincoln's coming, and by that means the passage was made and probably up Anderson's Creek until Posey's place was reached. From Posey's farm the direction to Lincoln's land would be almost west.





Opossum  
Squirrel  
Duck  
Deer  
Bear  
Wild Turkey

tion than any other part of the southern quarter of the new State — hardly more than one adult white man to every four square miles, and, counting women and children and youths under twenty-one, a little over one human being to each square mile.<sup>1</sup>

Into this abode of gloom and solitude, Thomas Lincoln made his slow and toilsome way in mid-autumn of 1816. Leaving his whisky and remaining tools with some one at Posey's on the river's bank<sup>2</sup> and taking only his axe and hunting-knife, he struggled inward, cutting a way, now and then, through the thick and tangled underbrush.

Sixteen miles he journeyed and, at last, having reached the vicinity of a scattered cluster of other dwellers in the fastnesses,<sup>3</sup> chose a place to which to bring his family. Upon a knoll surrounded by marshy land, culture fields of malaria,<sup>4</sup> he decided to start life anew — his fourth venture since he had married Nancy Hanks ten years before. 'I will jest Say to you that it was the Brushes [brushiest] Cuntry that I have Ever Seen in any New Cuntry, . . . all Kinds of under groth Spice wo[o]ld . . . Shewmake Dogwood grape Vines Matted to-Geather So that as the old Saying goes you could Drive a Butcher Knife up to the Handle in it,' wrote Dennis Hanks who went there the following year.<sup>5</sup> Perchance the trees on the little hill were fewer, as sometimes was the case with these elevations.

A curious circumstance distinguished Thomas Lincoln's selection of his future home — strange because other settlers had chosen tracts not greatly superior to his, but every one had

<sup>1</sup> In the region which now comprises Warrick, Spencer and Vanderburg counties, Indiana, there were by the end of 1815, 285 'white males over twenty-one years of age' Including women and children, the total population was but 1415. Census of Warrick County, Dec. 4, 1815, as given in *Warrick and its Prominent People*: Will Fortune, 15.

<sup>2</sup> Hanks to Herndon, March 7, 1866. Weik MSS.

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps seven families. *Ib.* Six families, two or three miles apart, were considered to be a good settlement as late as 1815. Cockrum, 459.

<sup>4</sup> Nicolay and Hay, I, 30. 'The country was . . . swampy.' Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>5</sup> Hanks to Herndon, March 22, 1866. Also Jan. 6, 1866; and David Turnham to Herndon, Feb. 21, 1866. Weik MSS. And see *Recollections*: Harris, 20-1.

built his cabin near a spring or stream. Water at hand was the first essential of the pioneer family.<sup>1</sup>

Lincoln overlooked this requisite, for the supply of drinking water nearest the knoll selected by him was a spring more than a mile away; and no brook ran closer. Little Pigeon Creek was slightly less distant,<sup>2</sup> but not so accessible as the spring; and the pools left by rains were as unhealthful as they were inconvenient. As wells were not successful on his land, seepage into holes dug for the purpose was the only other source of water for drinking and cooking, a fact that later caused Lincoln much labor and annoyance.<sup>3</sup>

Roughly marking by brush heaps the tract he proposed to occupy, Thomas Lincoln returned to Kentucky to bring his family to their new wilderness home.<sup>4</sup> Memory of the loss of the Sinking Spring farm, or rather, of the two hundred dollars which he had paid Isaac Bush for it, still dully smouldered within his breast, it appears; for, as we have seen, late as the season already was, he went to Nelson County and, on November 17, 1816, made oath to a cross bill against Bush, demanding judgment for the amount.

Not earlier, then, than the approach of December, 1816, the Lincoln family started for the Indiana solitudes. Two horses bore husband, wife, and children as well as household belongings. Upon one horse rode the father, his little son mounted behind him; on the other horse was Nancy Lincoln, with their nine-year old daughter.<sup>5</sup> How they carried through Kentucky on two horses thus laden articles needful in journey and forest abode,<sup>6</sup> does not appear; but it was managed in some fashion.

Thus Thomas Lincoln 'packed through,' as such methods of

<sup>1</sup> 'The pioneers made their location where there was plenty of good spring water.' Cockrum, 510.

<sup>2</sup> 'The pioneer located his home with little regard to anything but a supply of good water.' *History of Indiana*: Logan Esarey, 421.

<sup>3</sup> Hanks to Herndon, March 12, 1866. Weik MSS.

<sup>4</sup> Murr, *Indiana Magazine of History*, XIII, 319; *Life of Abraham Lincoln*: Ward Hill Lamon, 21-2.

<sup>5</sup> Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>6</sup> Hanks to Herndon, March 7, 1866. Weik MSS.

<sup>6</sup> Hanks in his second Chicago statement says that they carried feather beds, clothing, and other articles, which, of course, is absurd.

...on the other horse was Nancy Lincoln...





travel and conveyance were then called, to the Kentucky shore of the Ohio. Their route lay through Elizabethtown<sup>1</sup> where, however, it seems they did not tarry. In two days, the ferry was reached, where, leaving the horses, the Lincoln family was taken across the river to Posey's farm on the Indiana side.

There, it is said, Thomas Lincoln borrowed a wagon to take wife, children, and household articles to Pigeon Creek. If he went in a wagon, it is well-nigh certain that it was wholly of wood, with solid wheels made from sections of great logs, since few if any other kind of vehicles were used in the backwoods at that time;<sup>2</sup> and it is probable that this clumsy contraption was drawn by oxen.<sup>3</sup> But it is more likely that he used the common conveyance of those days, a stout heavy sled, which generally was employed for rough going, even in summer time.<sup>4</sup>

Two days, at the very least, it must have taken to reach the knoll which the father had selected several weeks earlier; no road whatever existed,<sup>5</sup> and only a trail, 'Blazed out part of the way By a Man By the [name] of Jesse Hoskins,' served to guide them. 'The Ballance of the way . . . Lincoln had to Cut his way,' writes Dennis Hanks. So Thomas felled trees, cut underbrush and vines and made openings through which the oxen could drag the sled or wagon forward. Over stumps and rocks, across gullies, bogs, mounds, and soggy ground, they crept onward and, finally, reached the spot 'Rite in the Brush,'<sup>6</sup> where Abraham Lincoln was to spend the next fourteen years.

Winter was at hand — it may be that the thin snow even then was beginning to fly. Thomas hastily built a shelter for his family. It was a 'half-faced camp,' such as hunters were wont

<sup>1</sup> Friend to Herndon, March 19, 1866. Weik MSS.

<sup>2</sup> 'We did not have wagons in those days.' Statement of Allen Brooner: Hobson, 19.

<sup>3</sup> Even in 1830, fourteen years later, in Wayne County, Ind., where the settlers were unusually enterprising, the only wagons were of this kind and usually hauled by oxen. *Recollections*: Harris, 22-4.

The first wagon of any kind in the State was brought by John Small in 1814, but it is not described. Murr, *Indiana Magazine of History*, xiii, 320. And see *Historic Indiana*: Julia H. Levering, 71-2.

<sup>4</sup> *Recollections*: Harris, 22-4. Such sleds are still used over difficult forest roads in Maine and elsewhere during the summer months, since wagons are impracticable because of destructive wrenching from rocks and roots or miring in sloughs.

<sup>5</sup> Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>6</sup> Hanks to Herndon, March 7, 1866. Weik MSS.

to throw up as a protection against the weather, not unlike that sometimes found in sugar-camps at a later day.<sup>1</sup> A pole was laid from branch to branch of two convenient trees; a few feet opposite these trees two stout saplings forked at the top, the bottom ends sharpened, were thrust into the ground; another pole, parallel with the first, laid in the crotches; and the frame was completed by still two other poles fixed upon the ends of those already placed. On three sides poles were piled upon one another; and a roof was contrived of poles, brush, and leaves.

One side of this structure, which was only fourteen feet wide,<sup>2</sup> was not enclosed; and before this open side, a fire, started by steel and tinder,<sup>3</sup> was kept burning, upon which cooking was done. The fire also furnished such heat as the inhabitants of the half-faced camp could get, albeit sometimes accompanied by smoke, according to the caprices of the wind. At night, too, the blaze served to keep wild beasts from those who slept beneath that roof of brush.<sup>4</sup> The loose, unhardened earth was the floor, on which leaves were thickly strewn; and over these was spread such bedding as had been brought, skins for the most part and possibly a blanket.<sup>5</sup>

Within and about this camp of poles and brush existed Abraham Lincoln, then in his eighth year, together with his sister and parents throughout the winter of 1816-17.<sup>6</sup> Hanks relates that the second day after the family arrived, the boy killed a turkey 'with his farthers Riffle,' more by accident than skill, since

<sup>1</sup> Hanks's Chicago statements. Weik MSS.

<sup>2</sup> Hanks to Herndon, no date, but in 1866. Weik MSS.

'It was not a Cabin at all it was one of those half face camps a Bout 14 feet open in front.' *Ib.*

In his second Chicago statement Hanks says that he helped build the half-face camp, although he did not come to Indiana until a year later.

<sup>3</sup> This method continued until 1850. Dudley, 47. Often fire was borrowed, live coals covered with ashes being carried in a kettle from one cabin to another. *Ib.*, 55. And see Levering, 72.

<sup>4</sup> For a good description of this half-faced camp see Murr, *Indiana Magazine of History*, XIII, 320-1. And see Esarey, 421-2; Cockrum, 161; Boone, Thwaites, 63-4. As for Thomas Lincoln's hut, see Lamon, 22.

<sup>5</sup> This was not unusual. Many settlers, at first, had only brush and skins to sleep on. Cockrum, 501-2.

<sup>6</sup> 'He lived quite on the level, if not below, that of thousands of slaves whom he afterwards liberated.' Murr, *Indiana Magazine of History*, XIII, 321.



'Turkies two Numer[ous] to Mention.'<sup>1</sup> No other food but game brought in by Thomas Lincoln was possible at first; and water was to be had only by melting the snow, or by carrying in a kettle from the distant spring. Luckily Thomas Lincoln did not have far to go to get sustenance for his family, game filling the thickets that surrounded the small hill on which the half-faced camp was built. 'We did not have to go more than 4 or 5 hundred Yards to Kill deer, turkeys and other wild game,' Dennis Hanks relates of the following year.<sup>2</sup>

At last came the spring of 1817. Wild rose, swamp lily, wild honeysuckle, blue flag and yellow flag, Sweet William bloomed; crab apple, wild plum, haw trees blossomed; grape clusters began to form; abundant dogwood made spots of white among the brush and trees.<sup>3</sup> The waters of Pigeon Creek rose in their banks and, warmed by the season, invited those begrimed by winter's unwashed months.

Thomas Lincoln went back to Kentucky for swine, animals which all settlers kept, and on his return to Indiana was accompanied by Thomas Sparrow and Dennis Hanks. Dennis tells that 'at the Same time he [Lincoln] Drove his stalk Hoggs to Poseys and thare left them in the Beach Mast.' But alas for the pigs and Lincoln's hope of pork! 'I and Sparrow,' writes Hanks, 'Started home [Kentucky] and we had Not Ben at home Not More than a week tell here cum all the Hoggs A Bare had got a Mung them [and] Killed one this was a Bout 80 miles the[y] Cum.'<sup>4</sup>

In the autumn of 1817, Nancy Lincoln's heart was gladdened

<sup>1</sup> Hanks to Herndon, March 7 and 12, 1866. Also Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>2</sup> Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>3</sup> Hanks to Herndon, May 4, 1866; and Elizabeth Crawford to same, May 3, 1866. Weik MSS.

<sup>4</sup> Hanks to Herndon, March 12, 1866. Also Hanks's Charleston statement. Weik MSS. The hogs 'swam the Ohio' back to Kentucky. I 'saw them Knew them.' *Ib.*

Swine were kept in large numbers by the pioneers, the poorest settler always having several hogs. They lived on mast and became very wild. Bear constantly attacked them. See Cockrum, 470, 490-3.

'The bears, during the summer, are lean and hungry, and seize hogs and eat them alive. It is no uncommon thing to see hogs escape home with the loss of a pound or two of living flesh.' Faux: Thwaites, xi, 228, near Princeton, Ind., Nov. 7-8, 1819; *Recollections*: Harris, 39-40; Michaux: Thwaites, iii, 246.

by the arrival of her aunt and uncle, Betsy and Thomas Sparrow, who with Dennis Hanks, now eighteen years of age,<sup>1</sup> had come to live permanently with the Lincolns.<sup>2</sup> 'Lincoln had Bilt another Cabin By this time,' says Hanks, 'and got in it a Bout 40 Rods apart' from the half-faced camp.<sup>3</sup> This cabin was of the usual type, round logs with the bark on <sup>4</sup> and roof of poles and slabs. It was larger than any the Lincoln family had lived in, being eighteen feet wide and twenty feet long; and it was high enough for a loft beneath the roof, reached by pegs driven in the log walls.<sup>5</sup>

But no floor was laid, no door contrived, no window;<sup>6</sup> even the roof was not finished when cold weather came. Nor did the approach of another winter quicken the domestic enterprise of Thomas Lincoln; and Hanks chronicles of this and later years, that 'we all hunted pretty much all the time, Especially So when we got tired of work — which was very often I will assure you.'<sup>7</sup>

In the uncompleted cabin Thomas, Nancy and their children spent the fall of 1817 and the following winter; Thomas and Betsy Sparrow with Dennis Hanks, occupying 'that Darne Little half face camp,' as Dennis called it,<sup>8</sup> near by. No dogs or cats cheered the Lincoln hut, no chickens, hogs or cows were about.<sup>9</sup> The only light was from hog fat.<sup>10</sup> For most of the day the two men roved with their rifles, they, Nancy, and the children, living well-nigh exclusively on wild animals and birds —

<sup>1</sup> Hanks was born in Hardin County, Ky., May 15, 1799. R. N. Chapman to Jesse W. Weik, March 22, 1904. Chapman was Hanks's grandson. Also Hanks's written statement, April 2, 1866. Weik MSS.

<sup>2</sup> Hanks to Herndon, March 12, 1866. Weik MSS.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* Hanks is badly confused as to the time of his arrival and of other events, but says, 'I cant tell Exactly Bout Dates.' Same to same, no date, but in 1866, and his second Chicago statement.

<sup>4</sup> Cabins of hewed logs were seldom built before 1830. *History of Warrick, Spencer and Perry Counties, Ind.*, 411.

<sup>5</sup> Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS. Hanks thus describes the beds in the loft: 'Here were the beds. The floor of the loft was clap board and the beds lay on this. Here I and Abe slept and I was married there to Abes Step Sister, Miss Elizabeth Johnston.' *Ib.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ib.*; Nicolay and Hay, I, 29.

<sup>7</sup> Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>8</sup> Hanks to Herndon, March 12, 1866. Weik MSS.

<sup>9</sup> Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>10</sup> *Ib.*; Levering, 68-9.



Nancy Lincoln's heart was gladdened by the arrival of her aunt..



'ate them as meat, water and bread,' as Hanks told Herndon.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes Lincoln and Hanks varied their hunting by search for wild honey and 'found bee trees all over the forest.'<sup>2</sup> In the autumn nuts and wild fruit added variety to their fare. Hanks records that 'the country was full of chesnuts, Paw paus, . . . wild-turky peas;' <sup>3</sup> and hickory-nuts, walnuts, hazel-nuts were plentiful.

Now and then, when not hunting, the men cleared a patch of about six acres; <sup>4</sup> and a little corn and other vegetables were raised. If any corn ripened, the kernels were broken by pounding with a stone or axe-head in a mortar made by hollowing a place on top of a hard-wood stump, as was done by most people of the backwoods.<sup>5</sup> No mill was nearer than seventeen miles on the banks of the Ohio 'close to Posey's;' and when we got there, laments Dennis Hanks, 'the mill was a poor concern . . . a little bit of a tread horse mill the ground meal of which a hound could Eat as fast as it was ground.'<sup>6</sup>

David Turnham describes the mill as one that 'would grind from ten to fifteen bushels of corn in a day;' even a better mill built later gave such scanty output that Turnham often had to go 'twice to git one grist.'<sup>7</sup> Yet even such a mill 'was a God Send.'<sup>8</sup> Thereafter, when small fields had been cleared and before other mills were built nearer to his cabin, Thomas Lincoln and others of the scattered settlement went to this mill to have their sacks of corn ground into coarse meal, as occasional variation from the grain broken in the stump mortars.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hanks's Charleston statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>2</sup> Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS. And see Cockrum, 333.

<sup>3</sup> Hanks's Charleston statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>4</sup> Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>5</sup> This method was practised in Wayne County as late as 1833. *Recollections*: Harris, 9; Turpie, 21-2. And see Levering, 67.

<sup>6</sup> Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>7</sup> Turnham to Herndon, Feb. 21, 1866. Weik MSS.

<sup>8</sup> Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

Two years after this, in 1820, settlers in Wayne County, one of the richest parts of Indiana, went from ten to thirty miles to mill and often waited two or three days for their turns. Boys usually took a sack of corn on horseback and returned with the meal. *Recollections*: Harris, 9.

<sup>9</sup> The miller's toll was one fourth of the grain ground. Levering, 70. Wheat, oats,

It was more than a year after he had squatted on the land, that Thomas Lincoln bethought him of the necessity of entering it legally. So he made his way through the forests ninety miles to Vincennes where the land office then was, and, on October 15, 1817, entered the Southwest quarter of Section 32, Township 4 South, Range 5 West, paying the preliminary instalment of sixteen dollars, for which a receipt was given him.<sup>1</sup> This tract of one hundred and sixty acres, for half of which, as will appear, Thomas Lincoln finally succeeded in getting a patent, was at that time in Hurricane Township, Warrick County, which within a year became Carter Township, Spencer County. But four other entries of land had then been made in the whole township, each for an entire section or more.<sup>2</sup>

The following year, however, nine new settlers entered at the land office for tracts in Carter Township, all but two of the entries being for undivided sections.<sup>3</sup> Thus Lincoln acquired a sort of option on one hundred and sixty acres. In December he paid sixty-four dollars more, thus completing his first instalment of eighty dollars,<sup>4</sup> one fourth of the purchase price, the land being sold by the government for two dollars per acre. His right to a patent to the land when he should make the remaining payments thus being established, he rested content and the routine of farming, hunting, and carpentering continued.

Thus dragged along the slow dull weeks. Another winter went by, another spring and summer. Then in the autumn of 1818 a disease, mysterious as forest shadows, came suddenly upon Pigeon Creek. 'The milk sick' the settlers called it, because it attacked cattle and particularly milch cows as virulently as men and women. No cure was known and those seized generally died, and died quickly. The nearest doctor lived thirty-five miles from Pigeon Creek<sup>5</sup> and, if accessible, could have done no

and barley were thrashed with a flail and winnowed with a sheet. *Ib.* and 67. Faux found that one eighth was the miller's toll. Faux: Thwaites, xi, 199.

<sup>1</sup> No. 8499. General Land Office Records, Interior Department, Washington. In this receipt Lincoln's name is spelled Linkern.

<sup>2</sup> *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos., Ind.*, 272.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*

<sup>4</sup> Receipt No. 9205. General Land Office Records, Interior Department, Washington. Lincoln's name is here spelled Linkhorn.

<sup>5</sup> Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

good, since medical treatment proved wholly inadequate then, or for many years afterward.<sup>1</sup>

Betsy and Thomas Sparrow, who were known in the settlement as 'Mrs. Lincoln's father and mother,'<sup>2</sup> were stricken in the half-faced camp and there on skins and leaves covering the ground they died, about eighteen months after their coming.<sup>3</sup> A tree was felled, a log of right length cut and whip-sawed into rough, uneven boards. These Thomas Lincoln fashioned into rude boxes, fastening them together with wooden pegs driven into holes made by a small auger, for no nails were at hand.<sup>4</sup> Into these boxes the bodies were placed, and, upon a wooded hill some quarter mile distant, were buried.

To the sick old man and woman Nancy Lincoln had given all the help she could; she had visited, in her last illness, the wife of Peter Brooner, a hunter chiefly,<sup>5</sup> whose cabin was only half a mile away.<sup>6</sup> Mrs. Brooner died, too; and, at the same time, Nancy Lincoln fell sick. Neighbors attended her and one of them, William Wood, recalls that he 'sat up with her all one night.'<sup>7</sup> Thus 'she struggled on' for a week; and at the last, calling Sarah and Abraham to her side, told them to be good to their father, to each other, and to reverence God.<sup>8</sup> She died in October, 1818,<sup>9</sup> on the seventh day of her illness.

Thomas Lincoln made a coffin for his wife as he had for the others; and on a sled,<sup>10</sup> as the first pioneer woman in that region had been taken to her grave, the body of Nancy Lincoln was

<sup>1</sup> For the best account of the 'milk sickness,' see Cockrum, 401. Col. Cockrum, who wrote from personal observation and experience, says that whole towns were depopulated by the scourge; also a bilious fever, resembling yellow fever, was quite as deadly and more general than the milk sickness.

<sup>2</sup> William Wood's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>3</sup> Hanks to Herndon, March 12, 1866. Weik MSS.

<sup>4</sup> 'There was not a nail in a hundred miles of them.' Cockrum, 161.

<sup>5</sup> Brooner, like Lincoln, had come from Kentucky and was 'a widely known bear hunter.' *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos.*, Ind., 557.

<sup>6</sup> Statement of Henry Brooner: Hobson, 18.

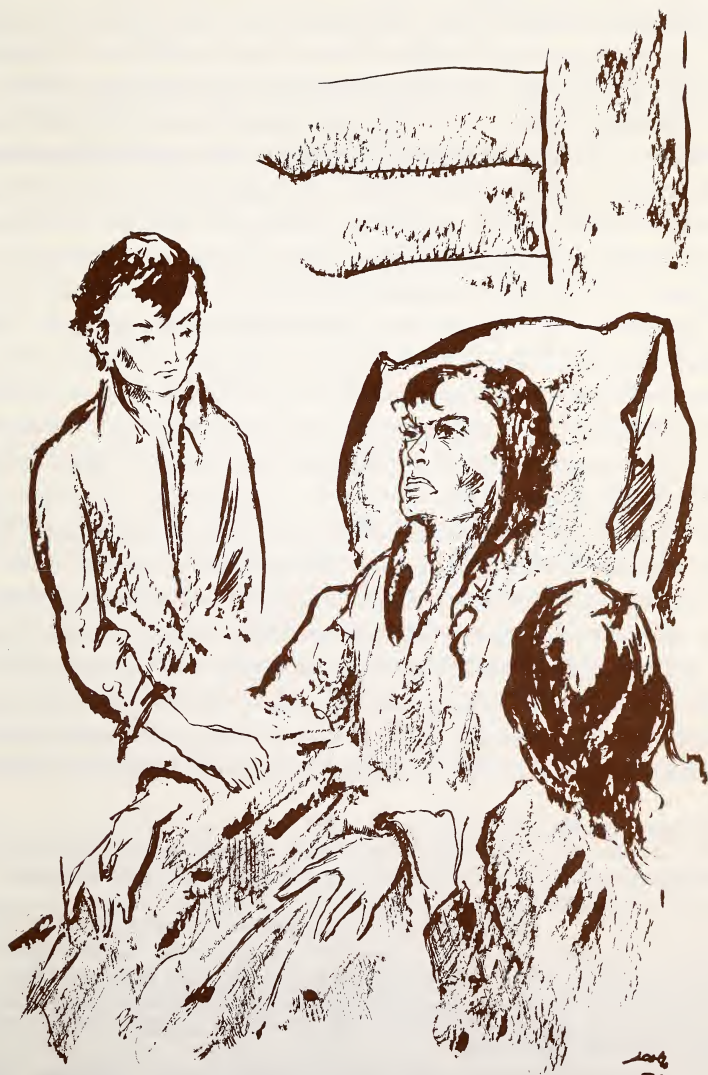
<sup>7</sup> Wood's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>8</sup> Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>9</sup> Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS. Grigsby does not name the day of the month, which is said to have been October 5, but there is no evidence as to the exact date of her death.

<sup>10</sup> Statement of Henry Brooner: Hobson, 18.





..calling Sarah and Abraham to her side .....

hauled to the knoll and buried by the side of her foster parents.<sup>1</sup> No stone or board was placed to mark where she lay, nor during the life-time of her husband or son was a monument of any kind erected over that neglected grave.<sup>2</sup>

Abraham was now nine years old, and there is no evidence that his emotions were unlike those of other children of similar age and in the same situation. Back to their doorless, windowless, floorless cabin, went Thomas Lincoln and his children; and there, with Dennis Hanks, they lived through the remainder of the winter, through the spring, the summer and the autumn of 1819. Sarah, now in her thirteenth year, did the cooking.<sup>3</sup>

The father and Dennis Hanks kept on hunting, between infrequent intervals of work in the clearing and when Thomas was not doing some small job of carpentering for other settlers. 'We always hunted,' Dennis reiterates, 'it made no difference what came for we more or less depended on it for a living — nay for life.' Abraham brought water from the spring and creek, or from holes dug to catch the seepage from rains; but this device was 'a tempo[ra]ry affair.'<sup>4</sup>

Sometime after the death of Nancy Lincoln, an itinerant Baptist preacher, David Elkin, came from Kentucky on a visit to the Pigeon Creek settlement; and while there preached a sermon over the graves of Nancy Lincoln and those who had died from the plague during the fatal days of 1818.<sup>5</sup> Abraham and his sister were present of course, as were Thomas Lincoln and Dennis Hanks, and all who lived in the settlement, about twenty in number.<sup>6</sup> But Abraham had not written to Elkin

<sup>1</sup> Hanks to Herndon, April, 1866. Weik MSS.

The particular spot where each of these people is buried is, of course, unknown; but the location of the grave of Nancy Lincoln is approximately determined, since the graves are close together.

<sup>2</sup> Lamon, 29.

<sup>3</sup> Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.*

<sup>5</sup> Hanks to Herndon, Jan. 6, 1866. Weik MSS. Hanks says that Elkin came to visit the Lincoln family. 'David Elkins of Hardin County Ky. Cum to pay us a Visit and preacht hir funel.' *Ib.* There was much visiting between the Indiana settlers and their Kentucky friends. Dennis Hanks went back and forth frequently. Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>6</sup> 'Next question how many people was at Mrs. Lincoln funel at hir Beriel Thare was aBout 20 persons the hole Nabourhood.' Hanks to Herndon, Jan. 6, 1866. Weik MSS.

And see list of settlers in Carter township: *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos., Ind.*, 272. A year

asking him to come and preach a funeral sermon over his mother's grave, as legend has it; even if the boy had thought of such a ceremony, of which he then could have known little or nothing, he could not write at that time, nor indeed for five years thereafter, 'so that he could understand' what he wrote.

Other settlers were taking up claims in the region, cabins of unbarked logs were rising here and there, children multiplying, society forming. In common with most people of the Western country, those on and about Pigeon Creek were very ignorant, rough mannered, vividly superstitious. The waxing and waning of the moon marked for them, the times to plant and sow. The howling of a dog meant the certain coming of death among them; and if a shovel or edged tool was brought into a cabin there could be no doubt that a coffin would be taken out. Nothing must be begun on Friday; a bird alighting at the window or flying into the house meant coming sorrow. Ghosts visited earthly scenes and haunted the unworthy. Witches, too, were real beings of evil; dreams were forecasts of events to come. Faith doctors and charms were 'implicitly believed in.'<sup>1</sup>

The cabins of these wood folk were often ill-kept, dirty in the extreme, infested with vermin.<sup>2</sup> There was no sanitation. Bathing or washing the body in any way was seldom attempted, seldom thought of except, of course, during 'swimming time' in warm weather. It is hard to see how, from December to March inclusive, the clothes they wore could have been washed.<sup>3</sup> Food was mostly of flesh, with some corn or wheat

later, however, thirty-one men, all then living in the whole of Carter township, voted at an election held in the home of Jonathan Greathouse. *Ib.*

<sup>1</sup> Murr, *Indiana Magazine of History*, xiii, 335-9. Murr tells of these and other superstitions from personal observation. See also Cockrum, 339-41, and *The First of the Hoosiers*: George Cary Eggleston, 88.

<sup>2</sup> Welby: Thwaites, xii, 233-4.

<sup>3</sup> Lack of bathing and washing clothes was practically universal among the pioneers. A well-educated and carefully reared New England woman who went with her husband to live in Illinois about this time records that she could not wash clothes oftener than every three months. *A Woman's Story of Pioneer Illinois*: Christiana Holmes Tillson, 86. Mrs. Tillson was a New England woman who went with her husband to Illinois in 1822. The book consists of letters to her children and is one of the best sources on early Illinois.

Between Princeton and Vincennes Faux saw only two 'neat log houses' — all others



broken in stump mortars; and, generally, the cooking was poor and insufficient, frying in grease being a favorite method.

Cabins usually were packed, husband and wife, children, guests, relatives, and hired men living in a single small room — cooking, eating, and sleeping there,<sup>1</sup> a loft sometimes relieving the congestion. The sense of modesty was embryonic, and men took off their clothes before women without a thought by either of any impropriety.<sup>2</sup> Men and boys wore deerskin trousers and coats and coonskin caps; the clothing of women and girls was of linsey-woolsey, home-made from wool and flax.<sup>3</sup> Usually everybody went barefoot during spring and summer;<sup>4</sup> and when they did not, wore moccasins made of hide, until shoes appeared.

Incredible quantities of whisky were consumed,<sup>5</sup> everybody,

were 'miserable log holes . . . and indolent, dirty, sickly, wild-looking inhabitants.' Faux: Thwaites, xi, 213.

<sup>1</sup> Travelers and others wrote many descriptions of cabins with numerous inmates, such as that of an early schoolmaster who boarded in a cabin sixteen feet square, where dwelt husband, wife, ten children, three dogs, two cats, and the teacher. Nicolay and Hay, i, 18.

'In a little log-hole . . . belonging to Mr. Ferrel, who, with his family, some adults, male and female, in all ten souls, sleep in one room, fifteen by ten . . . in three beds standing on a dirt floor. . . . The victuals are served up in a hand-bason; and thus one room serves for parlour, kitchen, hall, bed-room and pantry.' Faux: Thwaites, xi, 231. Nov. 9, 1819, near Princeton, Ind.

A Methodist circuit rider often found 'but one room to cook, eat, preach, pray, and sleep in for the whole family' and preacher. Brunson, i, 219.

<sup>2</sup> In one of the best cabins seen by William Faux, that of John Ingle in southwestern Indiana, 1819, the two men slept together next to 'six fine but dirty children,' while Mrs. Ingle and the hired girl slept in another bed. 'Males dress and undress before the females and nothing is thought of it. Shame or rather . . . false shame, or delicacy, does not exist here. It is not unusual for a male and a female to sleep in the same room uncurtained, holding conversations while in bed.' Faux: Thwaites, xi, 226. Nov. 6, 1819; and Welby: Thwaites, xii, 229.

<sup>3</sup> Levering, 69.

<sup>4</sup> Esarey, 424.

<sup>5</sup> 'No difference if grain was scarce or dear, or times hard, or the people poor, they would make and drink whiskey. And the number of little distilleries was wonderful. Within two miles of where we lived there were three of them. . . . The custom was for every man to drink it, on all occasions that offered; and the women would take it, sweetened and reduced to toddy.' *Recollections of Life in Ohio from 1813 to 1840*: William Cooper Howells, 125-6.

At Princeton, in 1819, Faux noted 'excessive drinking seems the all-pervading, easily-besetting sin of this wild hunting country.' Faux: Thwaites, xi, 212-3, Nov. 2, 1819.

'Another failing in their character is drunkenness; and they are extremely quarrelsome when intoxicated.' Woods: Thwaites, x, 317. And see Fordham, 65.

In 1819 alone, three licenses were granted to retail liquor in Boonville, Warrick County, although that town then had a population fewer than one hundred; eleven

women and preachers included, drinking the fiery liquid.<sup>1</sup> A bottle was in every cabin — to offer it was the first gesture of welcome, to refuse unpardonable incivility.<sup>2</sup> All used tobacco, chewing, smoking, snuffing; and corn-cob pipes in the mouths of women were a not uncommon sight.<sup>3</sup> Men were quick to fight and combats were brutal.<sup>4</sup> Profanity was general and emphatic.<sup>5</sup>

Yet an innate love of justice, truthfulness, and fair dealing permeated every community, and generous and ready hospitality was the highest ordinance. The desire that their children should get 'learning' was well-nigh a passion, second only, indeed, to their respect for law and insistence upon that regular procedure afforded by courts. The upright judge, was, by them, the most respected of men; the capable lawyer, the most admired. Religion, too, was a vital part of their lives;<sup>6</sup> and churches were organized as soon as there were settlers enough to

years later, 1830, but eighty-seven people lived there. *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos., Ind.*, 76.

An inn at Corydon, the State capital, a village of about one hundred cabins, advertised that dinner for 'gentlemen' on the Fourth of July would include 'plenty of Domestic Liquors,' all for '\$1 per head.' *Indiana Gazette*, June 29, 1821, as quoted by Charles Moores in *Indiana Magazine of History*, xiii, 37.

As late as 1833 the Sheriff of Perry County was fined for being so drunk during court time that he could not perform his duties. *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos., Ind.*, 621.

<sup>1</sup> Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>2</sup> 'Whisky was invariably offered to a guest. The farmer who did not supply his field-hands with liquor was considered too stingy to work for. . . . "Two" fips a gallon was the price.' Levering, 74.

Faux found whisky, as well as bread and meat, to be considered 'common necessities.' Faux: Thwaites, xi, 177.

<sup>3</sup> 'We frequently saw women nursing their children with pipes in their mouths.' Woods, Sept. 7, 1819: Thwaites, x, 247. Also Dudley, 15. 'The mother sat smoking her pipe, fat and easy.' Faux: Thwaites, xi, 248.

<sup>4</sup> Levering, 184. The largest number of fines by Justices of the Peace was for fighting. There were then so many cases of this kind in Spencer County that its historian calls the period the 'Fist and Skull Age.' *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos., Ind.*, 400.

In Perry County at the fall term of court, 1815, there were sixteen indictments, 'mainly for assault and battery.' *Ib.*, 618.

'I saw a man this day with his face sadly disfigured. He had lost his nose, bitten off close down to its root, in a fight with a nose-loving neighbour.' Faux: Thwaites, xi, 22.

Fordham found that biting and gouging were common methods of fighting. Fordham, 65, 149.

<sup>5</sup> At the first Circuit Court in Perry County, April 3, 1815, twenty-five men were indicted for profanity. *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos., Ind.*, 617.

<sup>6</sup> Levering, 86.

form small congregations. Preaching was crude, direct, vociferous; but it was an effective force for good.<sup>1</sup>

Schools were started<sup>2</sup> almost as soon as churches — in fact church and school were companion influences for decency, knowledge, and morality in pioneer life. And grave was the need of them. The drinking of whisky, the fighting and the swearing, were accompanied by repellent conditions of living. Men and boys told noisome anecdotes. Social relations were loose and undisciplined.<sup>3</sup>

A peculiar and distinctive dialect resulted from the untaught and unrestrained speech; and this dialect became common to the vast majority of people who had crossed the mountains to occupy the forests and prairies of the Western Country. If a man was feeble he was 'powerful weak,' and when he grew better he was 'fitter.' The word 'sot' meant sit, set, or sat. Nobody fought, they 'fit.' You did not stay awhile, but 'a spell.' How do you do, was expressed by the exclamation 'howdey.' You came 'outen,' not out of, the house, or field; and when there was much or many of anything there was a 'heap.' Wages were 'yearned,' not earned, and children always were called 'young uns.' When a person was persuaded or induced, he was 'hornswoggled.' Where was 'whar'; came 'kum'; heard 'hearn'; took 'tuck';

<sup>1</sup> Observers are unanimous in praise of these pioneer preachers. The Methodist 'circuit-rider' is especially commended. Smith, 97. *Ind. Hist. Soc. Pubs.*, 1, 163.

For an excellent description of the appearance of these men see *The Circuit Rider*: Edward Eggleston, 88; and as to the matter and manner of their preaching see *ib.*, 103-9.

'Mr. Devan, when preaching at Mr. Ingle's, stripped at it, taking off coat, waistcoat, and cravat, unbuttoning his shirt collar, and wildly throwing about his arms. He made the maddest gesticulations for the space of two hours, ever seen in a man professing sanity.' Faux: *Thwaites*, xi, 285. Nov. 30, 1819, at 'The English Settlement' near Princeton, Ind.

Rev. Alexander Devan was a prosperous farmer, a member of the Indiana Constitutional Convention in 1816, and one of the first Baptist preachers in southwestern Indiana. *Ib.*

<sup>2</sup> The impulse for education in early Indiana is shown by the number of ambitious private schools established: a seminary at Corydon in 1816, Vincennes Academy 1817, Martin's Academy at Livonia 1819, New Albany School 1823, New Harmony Seminary 1826, Cambridge Academy at Lawrenceburg 1826, Hanover Academy 1827, and Eel River Seminary at Logansport 1829. *Hist. of Education in Indiana*: Richard G. Boone, 60. There was literary ambition too. In 1818 a *Life of Napoleon*, of unknown authorship, was printed in Salem, Ind., by Ebenezer Patrick and Beebe Booth — the first book printed in that town.

<sup>3</sup> At the first circuit court of Perry County, April 3, 1815, nearly all indictments were



care 'keer'; than 'nor'; because, 'kase.' Distance and direction were expressed by 'way back' or 'over yander.' When addressing the chairman of a public meeting the speaker said 'Misteeer Cheermun.'<sup>1</sup> Many of these idioms and pronunciations Lincoln retained throughout life — he began his famous Cooper Union speech by saying, 'Mr. Cheerman.'<sup>2</sup> In addition to this dialect, plain, short words were used which now are avoided. In short, says Esarey, the language of the pioneers was that of the peasantry of the eighteenth century.<sup>3</sup>

The amusements of the people were so contrived as to get needed work done; but they were boisterous with rampant jollity. The felling of the splendid forests to make clearings left great quantities of logs that could not be used for cabins or stables; and these logs were burned. So at 'log rollings' everybody helped mightily, ate heavily, and drank much whisky; and robust was the play and rough the jests at meal-time or when the logs were gathered and set on fire. Much the same happened when neighbors came to help put up the frames of houses or build cabins, 'raisings,' as these events were called.<sup>4</sup>

'Corn shuckings' were the scenes of greatest enjoyment. Men and boys were chosen by two captains and thus divided into equal groups, each strove to husk the most corn. Songs were

for rape, divorce, bigamy, slander, assault and battery, and adultery. Several divorces were granted, 'usually for unfaithfulness to the marriage vows, and for desertion.' Six or seven slander and divorce cases were tried at nearly every term of court. *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos., Ind.*, 616-8.

It was the same in other counties. At Boonville, county seat of Warrick County, cases of divorce, slander, and the like 'were on the docket almost every term of court.' *Ib.*, 62-6.

The early court records of Spencer County were destroyed by fire in 1831, but they showed, of course, the same state of things as in the adjoining counties, for, at the court held in Rockport in 1833, there were two indictments for fornication and adultery. *Ib.*, 308-9.

There were comparatively few indictments for larceny, partly because 'thieving . . . is here deemed worse than murder in consequence of the very great facility [difficulty] of living.' Faux: Thwaites, xi, 283. Nov. 29, 1819.

<sup>1</sup> These examples, with others, may be met in Tillson, 64-6, 79-82, 89, 96, 121-3; Dudley, 3, 45, 47, 53, 75, 141, 233; *Recollections of Early Illinois*: Joseph Gillespie, Fergus Historical Series, II, No. 13, 10-1.

<sup>2</sup> Murr, *Indiana Magazine of History*, xiv, 15.

<sup>3</sup> Esarey, 418-9.

<sup>4</sup> *Recollections*: Harris, 263. In Wayne County, 1820-30, the meals on these occasions were boiled ham, cooked potatoes, boiled turnips, corn pone, and pumpkin pie. The men drank whisky and the women eggnog. Boys carried the whisky. *Ib.*

sung, stories told, jokes cracked; 'and pass the bottle around' was the order of the hour.<sup>1</sup> Sugar-boilings, wool-shearings, and hog-killings were scenes of similar festivities.<sup>2</sup>

'Quilting bees,' where women met to make coverings for beds, were times of scarcely less cheer; for the provisions were the same and the men had nothing to do but play and drink whisky, which was as freely offered at quiltings as at the other pioneer festivities.<sup>3</sup>

Such were the surroundings and the society in which Abraham Lincoln's formative years were to be spent; and we shall now witness his development under these conditions, from his tenth to his twenty-first year.

When there were enough children in the settlement to justify the starting of a school, Andrew Crawford opened one in a cabin of unhewn logs, two or three miles from the hut of Thomas Lincoln. Like all others of the time it was a subscription school,<sup>4</sup> the teacher taking his pay in skins or farm produce,<sup>5</sup> far more valuable than the 'wild-cat' paper, which then was the only form of money. Indeed Dennis Hanks testifies that throughout their sojourn in Indiana deerskins, 'Hogs and Venison hams was a Legal tender and Coon Skins all So.'<sup>6</sup>

The Lincoln children went to Andrew Crawford's school for

<sup>1</sup> *Recollections*: Harris, 34. And see *Pioneer Hist. of Ill.*: John Reynolds, 316-7. For favorable description of 'corn shuckings,' see *Circuit Rider*: Edward Eggleston, 20-9.

<sup>2</sup> Levering, 75-6. Also B. B. Lloyd's statement, no date. Weik MSS.

<sup>3</sup> Drake, 186. Dr. Drake says that all these gatherings were occasions for drinking, profanity, fighting, and indecency. *Ib.*, 184.

<sup>4</sup> 'Schools were then supported wholly by subscription.' *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos., Ind.*, 409.

<sup>5</sup> Joab Hungate, a teacher of a similar school in Spencer County at that time, was paid eight dollars a month which 'was taken partly in grain.' *Ib.* At Rockport parents paid as high as from \$1.00 to \$2.00 a quarter for each child. *Ib.*, 399.

<sup>6</sup> Hanks to Herndon, Jan. 6 and March 22, 1866. Weik MSS.

Cash was asked only for powder, shot, whisky, and salt. Levering, 82-3.

Groceries, and other provisions were traded for skins, feathers, produce, etc., which, at stated season, 'the merchant shipped off to market, and then laid in a new stock.' *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos., Ind.*, 263-4.

J. W. Lamar, who lived at Troy, says that the settlers 'took their deer and bear hides, venison hams and other game' to that village and exchanged them for powder and shot, coffee, sugar, and clothing. Hobson, 23-4.

Barter was everywhere used. For many years afterward and in so opulent a settlement as the first to be made in Wayne County 'store goods' were bought by barter. *Recollections*: Harris, 59.

a while during the winter of 1818-19.<sup>1</sup> The school was held in 'a rude pole cabin with huge fire-place, rude floor of puncheons and seats of same, and a window made by leaving out a log on the side to admit the light, often covered with greased paper to keep out the wind.'<sup>2</sup> Spelling, reading, writing, and 'ciphering to single rule of 3 no further' were taught in the haphazard manner of the period and region.<sup>3</sup> It was a 'blab' or 'loud school,' the children studying vocally. Punishment was administered by whipping or making the child wear the 'dunce cap.'<sup>4</sup> 'When we went to Crawford he tried to learn us manners,' relates Nathaniel Grigsby, showing the pupils how to enter a room, the formalities of introduction and the like.<sup>5</sup>

But the teacher gave up after one season, it appears, as frontier school promoters sometimes did. Thereafter Andrew Crawford disappears from the chronicles of Pigeon Creek pedagogy.<sup>6</sup> Lincoln was then in his tenth year and he did not again go to school until 'he was about 14 or 15.'<sup>7</sup> What he learned from Crawford we do not know; a little simple reading, perhaps, and how to form words with a quill pen — certainly not much more, since he could not write well until four or five years later.<sup>8</sup>

Back and forth during the winter months of 1818-19, went the Lincoln children from the log schoolhouse in the woods to the unfinished cabin on the knoll. Thomas Lincoln and Dennis

<sup>1</sup> Grigsby's statement, Sept. 12, 1865. Weik MSS.

<sup>2</sup> *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos., Ind.*, 413. Even three years later at Rockport, the County seat of Spencer County, the school was held in this kind of a cabin of 'round logs' — not hewed logs (*ib.*, 398-9); and this was the best schoolhouse in the County.

For an excellent description of these pioneer schools see Cockrum, 459-63. Panthers and bears sometimes attacked these school cabins. *ib.*, 464-5.

<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Allen Gentry's statement. Also Hanks's first Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>4</sup> *Recollections*: Harris, 12-3. And see the *First of the Hoosiers*, Eggleston, 32-43.

<sup>5</sup> Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS. Grigsby is clear and positive as to the order in which Lincoln went to school in Indiana — first to Crawford, second to Dorsey, and third to Swaney, *ib.* The biographies usually give Dorsey as the first teacher.

<sup>6</sup> In May, 1818, Andrew Crawford was made a Justice of the Peace. *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos., Ind.*, 294.

<sup>7</sup> Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>8</sup> 'Abraham learned to write So that we could understand it in 1821.' Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS. With characteristic bragging, Hanks claimed that it was he who taught Lincoln to read and write: 'I taught Abe his first lesson in spelling, reading and writing. I taught Abe to write with a buzzards quill.' *ib.*





The school was held in a rude pole cabin...



Hanks were the providers, protectors, mentors. Hanks complains that they had 'to work Very hard Clair ground for to Keep Sole and Body to Geather and Every Spare time that We had we picked up our Rifle and feched in a fine Deer or turkey and in the winter time we went a Coon Hunting;' but Dennis seems to have included in this description of their toil all the years spent in Indiana.<sup>1</sup>

Imagination must picture the situation and manner of existence of these two men living with the girl and boy in that hut in the brush throughout the year 1819. From trustworthy accounts of better conditioned families in the same wilderness, it can only be believed that for the Lincolns 1819 was a year of squalor — mostly flesh for food, unfit water, wretched cooking, no knives or forks, bare feet, bodies partly clad, filthy beds of leaves and skins.<sup>2</sup>

A time came when even Thomas Lincoln could stand it no longer. So back to Kentucky he journeyed for another wife. He knew where to go, it appears, for he went directly to Elizabethtown where the woman he had first courted, Sarah Bush, still lived. She was now a widow, her first husband, Daniel Johnston, having died of the 'cold plague' in 1814,<sup>3</sup> leaving three children

<sup>1</sup> Hanks to Herndon, March 22, 1866. Weik MSS.

<sup>2</sup> Lamon, 26, 31.

<sup>3</sup> 'There are several English families living without bread, butter, milk, tea or coffee, for months. . . . Some three families cook and bake in one iron skillet, called the cook-all.' Faux: Thwaites, xi, 287-8, Dec. 9, 1819, at 'the English Settlement,' near Princeton, Ind. 'A spider skillet with lid and an earthen pot were more than the average cooking utensils possessed by a family.' Esarey, 422-3. It was with these that little Sarah Lincoln cooked for four persons for more than a year.

Faux describes the manner of life of two brothers, English immigrants in about this part of the county, though across the line in Illinois, 'living without any female, and fast barbarizing, in a most miserable log-cabin, not mudded, having only one room, no furniture of any kind, save a miserable, filthy, ragged bed. . . . Both were more filthy, stinking, ragged, and repelling, than any English stroller or beggar ever seen; garments rotting off, linen unwashed, face unshaven and unwashed, for, I should think, a month. . . . He [the elder brother] expects his sisters and [other] brothers into this miserable abode.' *Ib.*, 268, Nov. 26, 1819.

'This morning Mr. Ingle, in descending a ladder from his cock-loft bed-room, into which sun, moon, and stars peep, and all the winds and storms of heaven blow upon us, was left suspended by his arms to the chamber-floor, while the ladder fell from under him. Such are the miserable shifts to which people here submit without grumbling.' *Ib.*, 286, Dec. 1, 1819, at 'the English Settlement,' near Princeton, Ind.

<sup>3</sup> Haycraft to Helm, July 5, 1865. They were married March 13, 1806. The date of births of the children are not known, and Elizabeth is sometimes given as the second daughter, as, indeed, Dennis Hanks, who married her, does in one instance. See p. 45 n, *supra*.

for Sarah to care for, John D., Sarah [Elizabeth], and Matilda. Immediately on coming to Hardin County, Lincoln must have seen Sarah's brother, Isaac Bush, and collected from him at least part of the money which he had paid Isaac for the Sinking Spring farm eleven years before.<sup>1</sup> If so, it is but natural that the two men should have talked of the plight of widow and widower and the good sense of their marriage.

Certainly Lincoln made quick work of the business when he saw Sarah in Elizabethtown, and as certainly he was in funds. As related by Samuel Haycraft, then deputy clerk of Hardin County Court, Thomas Lincoln, on December 1, 1819, went to the house of Sarah Johnston in Elizabethtown, reminded her of their mutual bereavement and proposed that they get married 'right off.' The widow said she could not 'right off as she owed some little debts which she wanted to pay first.' Lincoln asked for a list of the debts 'got the list paid them off that evening. Next Morning I issued the license and they were marr[i]ed . . . right off.'<sup>2</sup>

Without delay Thomas and Sarah, with her three children, started for Indiana. They took with them the household goods and furniture which had been gathered by the thrifty Sarah during the lifetime of her first husband. In comparison with the store taken by Thomas and Nancy Lincoln in the winter of 1816, Sarah Lincoln's domestic effects must have been opulent; for it took a wagon and team of four horses, borrowed from Ralph Crume, a brother-in-law of Lincoln, to haul the load to the Ohio.<sup>3</sup> Pots, pans, skillets, blankets, covers, a feather bed, a bureau which 'cost 45 dollars in K[entuck]y,'<sup>4</sup> were among the things piled in the wagon.<sup>5</sup>

So, in mid-winter 1819-20, came Thomas and Sarah Lincoln

<sup>1</sup> See p. 23, *supra*.

<sup>2</sup> Haycraft to Herndon, Dec. 7, 1866. Weik MSS. Thomas Lincoln and Sarah Johnston were married, Dec. 2, 1819. Records Hardin County Court.

<sup>3</sup> Nicolay and Hay, I, 32. Thomas Lincoln's sister, Mary, married Ralph Crume, Aug. 5, 1801. Waldo Lincoln, 202.

<sup>4</sup> 'The Last time the time Mrs. Johnston cum . . . he cum in a wagon . . . a 4 horse team Belonging to his Broth[er]-in-law Ralph Crumes of Brackinridge County Ky.' Hanks to Herndon, March 12, 1866. Weik MSS.

<sup>5</sup> Statement of Mrs. Thomas Lincoln, Sept. 8, 1865. Weik MSS.

<sup>6</sup> Herndon, I, 30, 31.



So...came Thomas and Sarah Lincoln to the dirty, unkempt cabin..



to the dirty, unkempt cabin near Pigeon Creek, where his neglected children and the vagrant Dennis Hanks were maintaining a bare existence. So, too, began a new and distinct period in the life of Abraham Lincoln. Sarah Lincoln was blessed with energy and sense, was a good housekeeper, prudent, systematic, and with a passion for cleanliness. She was, says her grand-daughter, 'a very tall Woman, Straight as an Indian, fair Complection and was when I first remember her, very handsome, Sprightly talkative and proud, Wore her Hair curled till Gray, Is Kind hearted and very Charitable and also very industrious.'<sup>1</sup>

No more hunting for Thomas Lincoln and Dennis Hanks until they had split and smoothed puncheons and made a floor, finished the roof, put in a door, cut a place for greased paper to let in the light.<sup>2</sup> The children were washed, combed and 'dressed . . . up' so as to look 'more human'; the cabin cleansed, decent bedding put on the 'bedsteads made . . . of poles and clapboards.'<sup>3</sup> The fire-place was overhauled, ample cooking utensils installed; and Thomas was stirred into making a proper table, better stools and, perchance, a hickory chair or two.<sup>4</sup> The change was so pronounced that, nearly thirty-five years afterward, Lincoln remembered and described it.<sup>5</sup>

Eight persons, three adults and five children, now inhabited the Lincoln cabin.<sup>6</sup> Three or four years later, in 1823, John Hanks, the half-brother of Dennis Hanks, joined the Lincoln family and lived with them for four years,<sup>7</sup> thus making nine who dwelt within those crowded walls. But, under Sarah Lincoln's guidance, there were comparative order and harmony. The increased size of the family required more food and clothing of course, but this was easily managed by the efficient housewife. The burden of supplying provisions was chiefly upon Thomas Lincoln and Dennis Hanks; this did not trouble them greatly.

<sup>1</sup> Harriet A. Chapman to Herndon, Dec. 17, 1865. Weik MSS.

<sup>2</sup> Lamon, 31-2.      <sup>3</sup> Mrs. Lincoln's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>4</sup> Herndon, I, 31; Nicolay and Hay, I, 32.

<sup>5</sup> A. H. Chapman to Herndon, Oct. 8, 1865. Weik MSS.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas and Sarah Lincoln, Dennis Hanks, two Lincoln and three Johnston children.

<sup>7</sup> John Hanks to Herndon, June 13, 1865.



Without heavy exertion they produced sufficient vegetables, relying for the most part, however, upon game; for 'the Country was wild and desolate.'<sup>1</sup> The impulse to work which Sarah Lincoln brought into the life of her husband never spurred him to produce a surplus — he 'Jest Raised a Nuff for his own use,' not 'Mor than Bought his Shugar and Coffee and Such Like,' declares Dennis Hanks, adding that Lincoln 'was a very pore Man.' After awhile, indeed, when brush and trees had been cut from a few more acres, there were bigger crops of corn, and even 'Sum wheat a Nuf for a cake [on] a Sundy morning.'<sup>2</sup>

But often the family larder was allowed to run very low, it seems. Once all they had to eat was potatoes, which led Abraham to remark, when his father asked 'the blessing,' that they were 'very poor blessings.'<sup>3</sup> Food little concerned the boy, however, for 'Abe was a moderate eater,' his stepmother assures us. 'He ate what was set before him, making no complaint; he seemed carless about this. I cooked his meals for nearly 15 years.' And Mrs. Lincoln adds that 'he always had good health.'<sup>4</sup>

Thomas Lincoln varied his occupations of hunting and farming by working as carpenter. Some thought, indeed, that he preferred such work to labor on the farm, and 'relied upon it for a living' rather than upon agriculture.<sup>5</sup> 'Often and at various

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Lincoln's statement, Sept. 8, 1865. Weik MSS.

Faux records that, in the fall of 1819, Major Hooker 'killed fourteen deer and one bear. . . . Cook also met a fine bear.' Faux: *Thwaites*, xi, 286. At 'the English Settlement' near Princeton, Ind., Dec. 1, 1819.

'Partridges, or quails, are here so tame that, at noon-day, a man may kill them by throwing a stick into the covey.' *Ib.*, 299. Dec. 25, 1819.

Even thirty years afterward deer, wild turkey, otter and the like were still abundant in the forests of Spencer County. As late as 1848 Samuel Graham killed six deer 'in one day, besides three wild turkeys;' and on another day he 'killed nine otters, and on still another day sixty-seven muskrats;' and this chronicler observes of the times of Thomas Lincoln and Dennis Hanks, that 'the earlier hunters had higher sport with larger and fiercer animals.' *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos., Ind.*, 260.

In 1820 Robert Harding, while in his canoe at night on White River near the present site of Indianapolis, killed nine deer in the space of five miles; and thirty-seven turkeys out of a single flock were killed on a spot that is now the heart of the city. *Old Settlers: Robert B. Duncan, Ind. Hist. Soc. Pubs.*, II, 387-8.

<sup>2</sup> Hanks to Herndon, Jan. 26, 1866. Weik MSS.

<sup>3</sup> Harriet A. Chapman to Herndon, Dec. 10, [1866]. Weik MSS.

<sup>4</sup> Mrs. Lincoln's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>5</sup> John Romine's statement, Sept. 14, 1865. Weik MSS.

times,' says William Wood, a settler living near the Lincolns, 'he worked for me — made cupboards and other household furniture for me. He built my house . . . did all the inside work;' and Wood relates that 'Abe would come to my house with his father and play and romp with my children.'<sup>1</sup> Thomas Lincoln made furniture for other cabins too, such as that of Josiah Crawford which had one low room fifteen feet square.<sup>2</sup> Sometimes Abraham helped the father in his carpentering, although he disliked hammer and drawing-knife even more, if possible, than he did the plough and hoe. Once the two built a wagon for James Gentry, we are told, constructing the vehicle 'entirely out of wood, even to the hickory rims to the wheels.'<sup>3</sup>

From the first Thomas Lincoln had been hard put to get water, and this defect was sharply noted by Sarah Lincoln as soon as she was on the ground. Her daughter, then a very little girl, writes that 'My Earliest recollection of Abe is . . . carrying water about one mile' — a pet cat following him to the spring.<sup>4</sup> To get water nearer to his cabin Thomas Lincoln sunk many holes, but without result. He 'dug his hill to find water with a hand comb as it were — wanted water badly,'<sup>5</sup> Dennis Hanks told Herndon. Seemingly he did not succeed and believed that no water could be found by digging; for he refused to hire 'a Yankee' to discover water by a 'driving rod.' 'Do you suppose,' said he, 'that I am going to give you \$5 for a pig in a poke?'<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wood's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>2</sup> Statement of Elizabeth Crawford. Weik MSS. Josiah Crawford came to Indiana from Kentucky in 1824, five years after the second marriage of Thomas Lincoln. Also see Hobson, 22.

<sup>3</sup> Statement of J. W. Lamar. Weik MSS. Also Hobson, 24.

<sup>4</sup> Mrs. Moore's statement, Sept. 8, 1865. Weik MSS. Since there were no cats before Sarah Lincoln came, it is reasonably certain that this cat was brought by her.

<sup>5</sup> Hanks's Charleston statement, Sept. 8, 1865. Weik MSS.

<sup>6</sup> *Ib.* Detection by means of a 'driving [divining] rod,' of water beneath the surface of the soil then was, and for decades continued to be, a favorite method of determining spots for the digging of wells. The 'water finder' would cut a forked switch and, with an end in either hand, the butt straight forward, would walk slowly over the ground where water was sought. It was believed that when a point was reached where water was not far underground, the butt of the rod would turn sharply downward. Many had faith in this device and 'water finders' charged heavily for their discoveries. The sum asked of Thomas Lincoln, for instance, was extortionate for the time and place, especially since there was practically no currency, and the wizard usually required cash payment in advance.



...carrying water.....

10/10



When Abraham was old enough, he was sent to the mill with a bag of corn, and these journeys left upon his mind the most pleasing recollections of his boyhood. Thomas Lincoln had acquired a horse or two, and trips to the mill were made bare-back with the sack of grain or meal carried in front of the rider. After young Lincoln had learned to read he poured into the ears of companions on these mill rides everything he had read.<sup>1</sup>

A year or two after the coming of Sarah Lincoln, another school, about four miles away, was started by one Azel W. Dorsey.<sup>2</sup> It was exactly like that of Andrew Crawford except that Dorsey did not try to 'learn manners' to the children. Abraham went to this school for a short time.<sup>3</sup> A schoolmate tells us that he was 'long and tall . . . wore low shoes, short socks and his britches made of buckskin' were so short that they left 'bare and naked 6 or more inches of Abe Lincoln's shin bone.'<sup>4</sup> The school books from which the teacher gave out his lessons were the Bible, Webster's or Dilworth's *Spelling Book*, Pike's *Arithmetic* and a song book.<sup>5</sup>

It was at Dorsey's school that he perfected that clear, distinct chirography, so like that of Washington and Jefferson; and here too he learned to spell with that accuracy which was to become a tradition in the neighborhood. He did all the writing for the family and indeed for everybody in the settlement.<sup>6</sup> Even more important to his avid mind was the fact that he learned to read with ease and fluency.

So ended the education of Abraham Lincoln in schools, except

<sup>1</sup> Statement of Henry Brooner: Hobson, 19.

<sup>2</sup> The Christian name of this teacher is given in most biographies of Lincoln as 'Hazel'; but it was Azel W. The cause of this error was that in the letters and statements made by old settlers, acquaintances of the Lincolns, the name 'Hazel' Dorsey is given. This well illustrates the corruption of names and words by the pioneers. Dorsey was the first coroner of Spencer County. *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos., Ind.*, 278. He was one of nine men to contribute \$250 for the building of a bridge near Rockport. *Ib.*, 279.

<sup>3</sup> John Hanks to Herndon, June 13, 1865. Also Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>4</sup> Grigsby's statement, Sept. 12, 1865. Weik MSS. Grigsby says that all children were thus dressed: 'This was our school dress, our Sunday dress and every day dress.'

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.*, and Mrs. Moore's [Matilda Johnston] statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>6</sup> Mentor Graham to Herndon, July 15, 1865. Weik MSS. Also *Campaign Life of Lincoln*: John C. Scripps, 2.

This took little time, since mails were infrequent and expensive, the postage for a letter often amounting to forty cents. The pens were of goose-quill, and pokeberry juice served as ink. Levering, 83.



for a short and broken attendance in 1826 at a similar school taught by William Sweeney.<sup>1</sup> Including the two schools in Kentucky the boy went to school for less than a year. 'His father has often told me,' relates John Hanks, that Abraham 'had not gone to School one year in all his life;' <sup>2</sup> and Lincoln himself, long afterward said the same thing.<sup>3</sup> Nathaniel Grigsby thinks that Lincoln went to the Indiana schools for not less than eighteen months, altogether; <sup>4</sup> but Dennis Hanks insists that 'he got about Six Months Schooling while he lived in Indiana,' <sup>5</sup> and this estimate is probably the more accurate.

There was, indeed, no reason for him to go longer to these backwoods teachers — they 'could do him no further good; he went to school no more.' <sup>6</sup>

In the Indiana schools he excelled, it appears, particularly in spelling and could 'spell down' the whole class when, at the close of the school every Friday,<sup>7</sup> the older children were placed in line against the log wall for a contest in spelling.<sup>8</sup> He was unselfish with his proficiency. One day he showed a girl schoolmate, Anna C. Roby, the proper letter in the word 'defied,' by covertly placing a finger on his eye.<sup>9</sup>

He was notably studious in everything <sup>10</sup> — 'head and Shoulders above us all,' confesses Dennis Hanks.<sup>11</sup> He would help the other pupils, 'would learn us get our cip[h]ers.' <sup>12</sup> His stepmother tells us that, when at home, Abraham 'cyphered on

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos., Ind.*, 413. This is another example of mispronunciation. The settlers called Sweeney, 'Swaney' and so gave the name to Herndon. The biographies, following his MSS., have said that William Swaney was the third teacher of Lincoln in Indiana.

<sup>2</sup> John Hanks to Herndon, June 13, 1865. Weik MSS.

<sup>3</sup> Autobiography, 2.

<sup>4</sup> Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>5</sup> Hanks's first Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>6</sup> Mrs. Allen Gentry's statement, Sept. 17, 1865. Weik MSS. Mrs. Gentry was a schoolmate of Lincoln and of the same age. Her maiden name was Anna C. Roby. *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos., Ind.*, 452.

<sup>7</sup> John Hoskins' statement, Sept. 16, 1865. Weik MSS.

<sup>8</sup> Hanks to Herndon, March 22, 1866. Weik MSS. And see George Cary Eggleston, 44-5.

<sup>9</sup> Mrs. Gentry's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>10</sup> Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>11</sup> Hanks's Charleston statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>12</sup> *Ib.*

boards when he had no paper or no slate and when the board would get too black he would Shave it off with a drawing Knife and go on again: When he had paper he put his sums down on it.' <sup>1</sup> He made a copy-book by sewing together blank sheets which Dennis Hanks gave him: 'I bought the paper [and] gave it to Abe.' <sup>2</sup> In this he did his work in arithmetic, scribbling at three places this legend:

'Abraham Lincoln, his hand and pen  
he will be good but God knows when.' <sup>3</sup>

He early showed that kindness of heart which distinguished him throughout life. At Crawford's school the boy reproved other children for cruelty to animals, particularly the placing of glowing coals on backs of turtles; and, even then, wrote 'short sentences' against it. <sup>4</sup> While at Dorsey's school he wrote poetry. 'Abe took it up of his own accord,' relates Grigsby. He kept this up at Sweeney's too, and at both schools also wrote 'compositions against Cruelty to animals,' which barbarity seems to have been a favorite practice of his schoolmates, and young Lincoln's particular aversion. Indeed, revulsion at brutality, sympathy for the suffering, animals as well as humans, constituted the dominant note of his character, even in boyhood. He always came to school good humored and laughing and 'he scarcely ever quarreled.' <sup>5</sup>

He continued to write poetry as well as prose compositions long after his school days were over, it appears, and took his pieces 'straight' to the interested neighbor, William Wood, for comment and criticism. Even thirty-seven or thirty-eight years afterward, Wood could remember that one of Abraham's compositions was 'a poem' entitled 'The Neighborhood broil.' <sup>6</sup> The copy-book in which his school figuring was done, contains these lines in his youthful hand:

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Lincoln's and Grigsby's statements. Weik MSS.

<sup>2</sup> Hanks's Charleston statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>3</sup> A leaf of this book is among the Weik MSS. The same inscription is in the Mordecai Lincoln copy of Bailey's *Dictionary*, 'Mordecai' being in place of 'Abraham' and 'you' in place of 'God.'

<sup>4</sup> Mrs. Lincoln's and Grigsby's statements. Weik MSS.

<sup>5</sup> Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>6</sup> Wood's statement. Weik MSS.

'Time what an empty vapor tis  
And days, how swift they are  
Swift as an Indian arrow  
Fly on like a shooting star  
The present moment just, is here  
Then slides away in haste  
That we can never say they're ours  
But only say they're past.'<sup>1</sup>

The ability to read meant more to him, however, at this period of his development than did all else acquired at school. It opened to him the world of books — a world hitherto closed to him, well-nigh unknown, indeed. From this time forward, reading was the passion of the youth and, as will be seen, continued for more than twenty years to be the passion of the man.

About the time he learned to read, the boy was big enough to do work upon the ungracious farm, and to labor for others, his earnings going to the father, a legal right which Thomas Lincoln exacted rigidly until Abraham reached the full age of twenty-one. He worked for several of the small farmers of the settlement, for Romine, for Wood, for Taylor, for Crawford, for Turnham, ploughing, making rails, 'daubing' with mud the chinks between the logs of the cabins.<sup>2</sup>

By 1824 Lincoln and Hanks had 'a Bout 10 acres of corn and a Bout 5 acres of wheat 2 acres of oates one acre of medow;' and there was 'Very Little Change to 1830' in this proportion, says Hanks, who asserts that 'I No Exacly for I helped Do it.'<sup>3</sup> They kept some live stock too, but made little in that way. 'We Raised Sheep and Cattle But they Did not fecth Much Cows and Calfes was onely worth 6 Dollars Corn 10 cts wheat 25 [cents] at that time.'<sup>4</sup> So there was need for Abraham to work for other farmers or for anybody who would employ him.

Between Thomas Lincoln and his son, so different in intellect, character and appearance, there was little sympathy or understanding; and for some reason the father treated Abraham

<sup>1</sup> A. H. Chapman to Herndon, Oct. 8, 1865. Weik MSS.; also in Barrett Collection.

<sup>2</sup> Statements of Wood, Mrs. Crawford and Green B. Taylor. Weik MSS.; J. W. Lamar: Hobson, 22.

<sup>3</sup> Hanks to Herndon, Jan. 26, 1866. Weik MSS.

<sup>4</sup> Hanks to Herndon, Jan. 6, 1866. Weik MSS.



roughly. Sometimes a blow from the old man's fist would hurl the boy 'a rod.'<sup>1</sup> 'I have Seen his father Nock him Down of the fence when a Stranger would call for Information to NeighBour house,' testifies Dennis Hanks, who adds that 'the Old Man Loved his Childern.'<sup>2</sup> Thomas Lincoln also thrashed the lad, who took his punishment in silence, tears the only outward sign of what he felt and thought.<sup>3</sup>

All this led Dennis Hanks to doubt whether 'Abe Loved his farther Very well or Not,' and to conclude that 'I Dont think he Did.' For that matter Dennis was not certain of Abraham's affection for any of his relatives, then or thereafter. 'When he was with us he Seemed to think a great Deal of us But I thought Sum times it was hipocritical But I am Not Shore.' But Hanks is sure about the father. He 'Loved his Relitives Do anything for them he could No Better Man than Old Tom Lincoln.'<sup>4</sup> A. H. Chapman, son-in-law of Dennis Hanks, says: 'Thos. Lincoln never showed by his actions that he thought much of his son Abraham when a boy. He treated him rather unkindly than otherwise, always appeared to think much more of his stepson John D. Johnston than he did of his own son Abraham.'<sup>5</sup>

The father's ill-treatment of the son seems the more extraordinary in view of Abraham's remarkably good nature; for he was conspicuously obliging, eager to please everybody, his parents most of all. 'Abe was a good boy . . . the best boy I ever saw,' declares his stepmother. 'I can say,' she continues, 'what scarcely one woman, a mother can say in a thousand . . . Abe never gave me a cross word or look and never refused . . . to do anything I requested [of] him. I never gave him a cross word in all my life. . . . His mind and mine, what little I had, seemed to run together — move in the same channel.'<sup>6</sup> Abraham's devotion to Sarah Lincoln, whom he always called 'mama,' is

<sup>1</sup> Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>2</sup> Hanks to Herndon, Jan. 26, 1866. Weik MSS.

<sup>3</sup> Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>4</sup> Hanks to Herndon, Jan. 26, 1866. Weik MSS.

<sup>5</sup> A. H. Chapman to Herndon, Sept. 28, 1865. Weik MSS. Chapman adds: 'But after Abe was grown up and had made his mark in the world the old man appeared to be very proud of him.'

<sup>6</sup> Mrs. Lincoln's statement. Weik MSS.



striking. Many years later he told Chapman of 'the encouragement he always had received from his Step Mother' and declared that 'she had been his best Friend in this world and that no Son could love a Mother more than he loved her.'<sup>1</sup>

It cannot be too often stated that cheerful friendliness was the most striking feature of his personality — so striking, that it is noted with emphasis in all accounts given by acquaintances and observers of Abraham Lincoln in those days. He was 'Kindly disposed toward Everybody and Everything,' asserts Nathaniel Grigsby;<sup>2</sup> and his step-sister, Matilda Johnston, testifies that he was 'good to me, good to all. . . Abe seemed to love Everybody and Everything; he loved us all and Especially mother.'<sup>3</sup> Once he picked up a drunken man whom he saw sleeping in the snow and carried him home,<sup>4</sup> a noteworthy performance since, usually, no attention was then paid to such not infrequent cases.

The mystery of the father's attitude towards Abraham is deepened by the unanimous and positive testimony to the placid character of Thomas Lincoln. Dennis Hanks, who was devoted to him, describes him as a 'good humored, sociable man who took the world easy, loving everybody and everything.'<sup>5</sup> Dennis Hanks's son-in-law declares that Thomas Lincoln was 'remarkable peaceable . . . good natured;'<sup>6</sup> John Hanks says that 'happiness was the end of life with him,'<sup>7</sup> and Nathaniel Grigsby recalls that he was 'happy, lived Easy and contented.'<sup>8</sup>

Yet from his point of view, Thomas Lincoln was, perhaps, not without some excuse for his harshness; for certain it is that Abraham was so absorbed with books that he showed no love for work with his hands, and was not quick to take up any physical task. 'Farming, grubbing, hoeing, making fences,' as John Hanks describes the boy's work,<sup>9</sup> had no attraction for him. He would carry a book with him when he had to go

<sup>1</sup> Chapman to Herndon, Oct. 8, 1865. Weik MSS.

<sup>2</sup> Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Moore's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>4</sup> John Hanks to Herndon, June 13, 1865. Weik MSS.

<sup>5</sup> Hanks's Chicago statements. Weik MSS.

<sup>6</sup> Chapman's narrative. Weik MSS.

<sup>7</sup> Lamon, 15.

<sup>8</sup> Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>9</sup> John Hanks to Herndon, June 13, 1865. Weik MSS.

to work, and over its pages he would pore when rest time came.<sup>1</sup>

Even the alertly partial Dennis Hanks admits that Abraham 'was lazy — a very lazy man. He was always reading, Scribbling, writing, ciphering, writing Poetry,' etc.<sup>2</sup> This too is the testimony of his step-sister: 'Abe was not energetic except in one thing — he was active and persistent in learning — read everything he could — ciphered on boards, on the walls.'<sup>3</sup> The son-in-law of Dennis Hanks declares that 'Lincoln was not industrious as a worker on the farm or at any kind of manual labor' and that 'he only showed industry in the attainment of knowledge.'<sup>4</sup>

Of young Lincoln's dislike of work John Romine, a neighbor, asserts: 'He worked for me, [but] was always reading and thinking, I used to get mad at him. . . . I say Abe was awful lazy. he would laugh and talk and crack jokes and tell stories all the time didn't love work but did dearly love his pay. . . . Lincoln said to me one day that his father taught him to work but never learned him to love it.'<sup>5</sup> 'He was no hand to pitch in at work like killing snakes,' says Mrs. Josiah Crawford, 'but he would take hold of his work as camely [calmly] and pleasant as his manner was other ways.'<sup>6</sup>

The distasteful toil in field and wood was lightened by Abraham's fun and wit; and, although he had no voice for singing, he would join the other hands in shouting the songs of the time and place — in the language of Dennis Hanks, 'Hail Collumbia Hap[py] Land if you aint Broke I will Be Damned,' or 'the turbentuck [turbaned Turk] that Scorns the world and Struts aBout with his whiskers curld for No other Man But himSelf to see and all Such as this.'<sup>7</sup> Other and rougher songs there were. Nathaniel Grigsby tells us that: 'we sung what is called carnel Songs and love songs. i cannot repeat any of them at this time

<sup>1</sup> Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>2</sup> Hanks's Charleston statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Moore's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>4</sup> Chapman's narrative. Weik MSS.

<sup>5</sup> Romine's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>6</sup> Mrs. Crawford to Herndon, Sept. 7, 1866. Weik MSS.

<sup>7</sup> Hanks to Herndon, Dec. 24, 1865. Weik MSS.



..always reading ....



we sung a song called Barbra allen also we sung the Silk Merchant daughter and others.’<sup>1</sup>

Hanks recalls that, ‘Abe gaust [used] to try to sing pore old Ned But he Never could Sing Much;’<sup>2</sup> but Mrs. Crawford, who had an uncommonly strong memory,<sup>3</sup> says that Lincoln ‘use to sing one was cauled John adconsors [Anderson’s] lementation and one that was cauled William riley and one that was made about ginerall Jackson and John adams . . . though I can’t memorise but verry little of any of them he sang but verry little when he was about the house.’<sup>4</sup> Mrs. Crawford dwells upon John Anderson’s Lamentation and insists that it was the song which Abraham sang most frequently. It was a commonplace and badly written jingle about the death of Anderson’s wife, his condemnation to be hanged, the destitution of his children, all due to ‘much intoxication.’

So the tall, bony youth, with a coonskin cap on his head and clad in deerskin shirt and homemade trousers<sup>5</sup> which were still always far too short, exposing many inches of ‘sharp, blue and narrow’ shins,<sup>6</sup> went about the countryside doing, in languid fashion, the jobs he was hired to do, or working reluctantly on his father’s stumpy farm; but always cracking jokes, telling stories, joining, though poorly, in the songs of the other workers; and, whenever his father or employer was not about, making speeches to his fellows. Strangely enough Abraham did not care for fishing or hunting,<sup>7</sup> rarely joining the pursuit of even coon and turkey,<sup>8</sup> although, boasts Dennis Hanks, ‘we sure were excellent bow shots — a squirrel couldnt escape.’<sup>9</sup>

Reading, however, was the outstanding phase of Lincoln’s

<sup>1</sup> Grigsby to Herndon, Jan. 21, 1866. Weik MSS. Versions of Barbara Allen and The Silk Merchant’s Daughter are in *English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians*: Campbell and Clark, 90, 186.

<sup>2</sup> Hanks to Herndon, Dec. 24, 1865. Weik MSS.

<sup>3</sup> It was she who gave Herndon, from memory, the exact wording of the ‘Chronicles of Reuben,’ thirty-six years after that satire was written. See p. 92, *infra*.

<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth Crawford to Herndon, Feb. 21, 1866. Weik MSS. ‘William Riley’ was a well-known ballad of English origin, but ‘John Anderson’ is not to be confused with Burns’ verses of the same title, nor with George J. Bennet’s ‘John Anderson’s gane.’

<sup>5</sup> Hobson, 22.

<sup>6</sup> Romine’s statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>7</sup> Chapman’s narrative. Weik MSS.

<sup>8</sup> Grigsby’s statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>9</sup> Hanks’s Charleston statement. Weik MSS.

life at this time. Much as he loved pranks with other youths, he would forego their jollity and lose himself in some new volume upon which he chanced. 'Whilst other boys were idling away their time,' says a schoolmate and companion, 'Lincoln was studying his books. . . . He read and thoroughly read his books whilst we played.'<sup>1</sup> But there was little if any studying by the wavering light from logs in the fireplace or from the dim glow of turnip candle. On the contrary, he studied in the daytime, says his stepmother; 'didn't after night much, went to bed early, got up early and then read.'<sup>2</sup>

Thus he consumed the scanty store of books brought to the Lincoln cabin by his stepmother, when she came to Pigeon Creek near Christmas time, 1819, wrought in cabin and surroundings the miracle we have witnessed, and rescued the children from the dirt accumulated since their mother died a year before. There had been a few books in her Kentucky household and, although Sarah Lincoln could not read, she knew the value of them, it seems, and brought them with her. There were but four or five volumes — *Robinson Crusoe*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Sinbad the Sailor*, *Æsop's Fables*.<sup>3</sup> It appears that this was the first time a Bible found a place in the cabin, for Hanks records that 'Thomas Lincoln brought the Bible in 1818 or 19.'<sup>4</sup>

On March 2, 1821, Congress extended the time for making payments on government land bought by settlers under the Act of 1800, and on September 12, Thomas Lincoln claimed his right under that act.<sup>5</sup> There the matter rested for six years. As the summer opened the Lincoln cabin was cheered by a wedding within the family. Dennis Hanks married Elizabeth Johnston<sup>6</sup> who, if she was the eldest of Sarah Lincoln's children, could not

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Chapman's statement; Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Lincoln's statement, Sept. 8, 1865. Weik MSS.

<sup>3</sup> This was a fairly large library for a pioneer cabin. As late as 1833 in a richer and more advanced part of the state, a large library consisted of *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Weems's Washington*, *Weems's Marion*, a *History of the United States*, an abridged *English History*, *Cowper's Poems* and the Bible. Turpie, 20.

<sup>4</sup> Hanks's Charleston statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>5</sup> Declaration No. 1964. Lincoln signed his name to this paper. General Land Office Records, Interior Department, Washington.

<sup>6</sup> June 9, 1821. Marriage Register, Spencer Co., Indiana.

possibly have been more than fifteen years of age.<sup>1</sup> It is well-nigh certain that they continued to live with the Lincolns, since the husband makes no mention of their having gone elsewhere.

In 1823, seven years after Thomas Lincoln came to Indiana and four years after his marriage to Sarah Johnston, he joined, by letter, the Pigeon Creek Baptist Church,<sup>2</sup> a congregation of Primitive Baptists,<sup>3</sup> the log house for which, one mile south of his cabin, he had helped to build in 1819.<sup>4</sup> He made the window frames, door casings and pulpit, we are told. This church house seems to have been a most pretentious building. In size it was twenty-six by thirty feet,<sup>5</sup> built of hewed logs, with fireplace and chimney of brick made by David Turnham, the mold for which was fashioned by Thomas Lincoln without a particle of iron, only wooden pegs being used.

To this church, after 1823, the family went when a preacher of that sect came to Pigeon Creek. When Abraham was in his fifteenth year, he would repeat to his companions and others, almost verbatim, the sermons he heard,<sup>6</sup> imitating the delivery of the preacher, for he was an excellent mimic.<sup>7</sup> His stepmother declares that 'he would hear sermons preached, come home, take the children out, get on a stump or log and almost repeat it word for word.'<sup>8</sup>

Although others of the family became members of the Pigeon Creek congregation, Abraham did not then or afterwards 'join church.' His stepmother explains that 'Abe had no particular religion — didn't think of that question at that time, if he ever did. He never talked about it.'<sup>9</sup> 'i cannot tel you what his notions of the bible were,' wrote Nathaniel Grigsby to Herndon; 'he talked about religion as other persons did but i do not now

<sup>1</sup> Her parents were married March 13, 1806.

<sup>2</sup> Records of Little Pigeon Creek Baptist Church, in possession of Samuel Alley of Buffalo, Ind.

<sup>3</sup> Hanks to Herndon, no date, but 1866. Weik MSS.

<sup>4</sup> Hobson, 22.

<sup>5</sup> Murr: *Indiana Magazine of History*, XIII, 342.

<sup>6</sup> Statements of Mrs. Moore and Dennis Hanks. Weik MSS.

<sup>7</sup> Chapman's statement. Weik MSS., and Lamon, 55.

<sup>8</sup> Mrs. Lincoln's statement; and Hanks to Herndon, no date, but 1866. Weik MSS.

<sup>9</sup> Mrs. Lincoln's statement. Weik MSS.



...repeat it word for word.



his view on religion he never made any profession while in Indiana that I now of.' <sup>1</sup> Mrs. Josiah Crawford, who knew all the Lincoln family well, in answer to a direct question writes: that she 'never heard of his ever making any such pretensions. I don't think he ever did though he seemed to be a well wisher he went to meeting some times and was well behaved.' <sup>2</sup> And Dennis Hanks avers that 'as to his particular views in Religion I can't tell But I Don't think he held any Views Very Strong.' But, Dennis adds, 'when he went to church he allways could tell the text.' <sup>3</sup>

There is sharp dispute as to the extent of his reading of the Bible, Dennis Hanks asserting that 'Lincoln didn't read the Bible half as much as [is] said,' and that although 'he did read it, I thought[t] he never believed it and think so still.' <sup>4</sup> Mrs. Lincoln confirms Hanks's testimony: 'Abe read the bible some, though not as much as said.' <sup>5</sup> On the other hand Grigsby declares that 'he was a great talker on the scriptures and read it a great deal;' <sup>6</sup> and Grigsby is supported by Lincoln's later literary style.

But, reports Dennis Hanks, 'He Never would Sing any Religious Songs it appeared to me that it Did not Suit him.' <sup>7</sup> These songs were 'lined out' to the congregation by the preacher from Dupuy's <sup>8</sup> *Song Book*, the favorites being 'Oh when shall I see Jesus,' 'How tedious and tasteless the hours,' 'Jesus my all to heaven has gone' and 'Come thou fount of every blessing.' <sup>9</sup>

The books at home exhausted, he ranged the countryside in search of more, an intellectual prowler for the sustenance of the printed page. His step-mother asserts that 'Abe read all the

<sup>1</sup> Grigsby to Herndon, Jan. 21, 1866. Weik MSS.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Crawford to Herndon, Feb. 21, 1866. Weik MSS.

<sup>3</sup> Hanks to Herndon, no date. Weik MSS.

<sup>4</sup> Hanks's Charleston statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>5</sup> Mrs. Lincoln's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>6</sup> Grigsby to Herndon, Jan. 21, 1866. Weik MSS.

<sup>7</sup> Hanks to Herndon, 'April' 2, 1866. Weik MSS.

<sup>8</sup> The letters and statements of the pioneers to Herndon uniformly give the title of this volume as Dupree's *Song Book* — another example of slovenly pronunciation.

<sup>9</sup> Hanks to Herndon, 'April' 2, 1866; and Grigsby to Herndon, Jan. 21, 1866. Weik MSS.

books he could lay his hands on.’<sup>1</sup> In 1823 when Abraham was fourteen years of age, Levi Hall who had married Nancy Hanks, aunt of Nancy Lincoln and mother without marriage of Dennis Hanks, came with his family to the Pigeon Creek settlement.<sup>2</sup> They brought the copy of Bailey’s *Etymological Dictionary*,<sup>3</sup> which Mordecai Lincoln had bought in 1793. The fact that this dictionary was at his hand must be borne in mind while considering the books read by Lincoln during the years that he remained in Indiana.<sup>4</sup>

Several books were discovered by the eager youth and made his intellectual property; for, as we shall presently see, Lincoln remembered all he read. Only six of these volumes will here be noted, however, since the influence of these was determinative.

From some source and in some way he got hold of a copy of Grimshaw’s *History of the United States*.<sup>5</sup> Of all the American histories in one volume published at that time none had such peculiar qualities as that by William Grimshaw.<sup>6</sup> The first chapter explains the advances made in astronomy, geography, and navigation; and, thus, the reader has before him at the start the existing condition of the world. Then follows the account

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Lincoln’s statement; Graham to Herndon, July 15, 1865. Weik MSS.

<sup>2</sup> Hanks to Herndon, March 12, 1866. Weik MSS.

Levi Hall and his wife Nancy, mother of Dennis Hanks, died while in Indiana and were buried close to the grave of Nancy Lincoln and Betsy Sparrow. ‘The woman was Side by Side Abes mother in the Midle first my ant which was Thomas Sparrows wife on one Side of Abes mother and my mother on the othe[r] Side Levy Hall on the Side of his wife which wa[s] my mother and Thomas Sparrow on the Side of his wife which was my ant [and] the 5 together.’ Hanks to Herndon, no date. Weik MSS.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Hall brought the Dictionary to Indiana.’ Hanks’s Charleston statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>4</sup> On the inside cover of this volume is written in Lincoln’s early handwriting, ‘Abraham Lincoln his book, bought in the year of our Lord 1795.’ Mordecai Lincoln has signed his name in four places. See p. 21, *supra*. Bailey’s *Dictionary*, first published in 1721, was very popular and at least twenty-five editions were printed. It is said that Pitt the younger studied this dictionary word for word. It included all English words without regard to their vogue or repute, and is much superior to Johnson’s *Dictionary*, published in 1755. Indeed, Johnson used an interleaved copy of Bailey in the preparation of his own work.

<sup>5</sup> ‘Abe read I think Grimshaws History of the U[nited] S[tates].’ Mrs. Moore’s statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>6</sup> There were no less than fifteen *Histories of the United States*, each in one volume, and by different authors, published up to 1825; and there were three of two or more volumes. Grimshaw’s *History* was published in Philadelphia and ran through fifteen large editions.



of the discovery of America and the development of the colonies.

Quickly the author reaches the subject of slavery, bitterly condemning it. 'What a climax of human cupidity and turpitude! . . . The colonists . . . place the last rivet to the chains!' Throughout the little volume the student is not permitted to lose sight of the shackle and the lash. The early New England persecutions are set forth in wrathful terms and an earnest plea made against intolerance. The causes of the Revolution are stated clearly, the patriot writings named, the War for Independence and later events described. The book ends with the cession of Florida to the United States; and, as a climax, the progress of literature, science and art is described.

The very last paragraph reads: 'Let us not only declare by words, but demonstrate by our actions, that "all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator, with the same inalienable rights: that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Let us venerate the instruction of that great and amiable man to whom, chiefly, under Providence, the United States are indebted for their liberties; the world for a common hero: "That there exists an indissoluble union between virtue and happiness, between duty and advantage."'

Abraham had worked for David Turnham, who lived near Grandview on the Ohio. Turnham, six years older than Lincoln, was a prosperous farmer, a Justice of the Peace and a man of uncommon ability.<sup>1</sup> As will presently appear, he had much influence on Lincoln's life. He owned the *Revised Laws of Indiana*; and sometime before he left the State, Lincoln borrowed this formidable volume of nearly five hundred long pages and read it repeatedly and with care. This was the first law book he ever read.<sup>2</sup> It contains the Declaration, the Constitution, the first twelve Amendments, the Virginia Act of cession of the Northwest Territory, the Ordinance of 1787, the Act admitting Indiana, and the first State Constitution. Then follow about four

<sup>1</sup> David Turnham was born Aug. 2, 1803, near Lebanon, Tenn., and came to Spencer County about 1818, settling near Grandview and 'becoming one of the foremost men of the county, and also a public official.' *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos., Ind.*, 562.

<sup>2</sup> Grigsby to Herndon, Oct. 25, 1865, Weik MSS.; Turnham to Herndon, Oct. 12, 1865; *Lincoln the Litigant*: William H. Townsend, 40.

hundred pages of laws on every subject which then required legislation — rights and remedies, crimes and punishments, courts and procedure, offices and fees, and all the machinery of civil government. Through this volume Lincoln acquired a fair understanding of the elements of law and government.

During this period, too, he read another book which had more and greater qualities making for general culture than any one volume he is positively known to have read. This volume was popularly called 'Scott's Lessons.'<sup>1</sup> Its formal title was *Lessons in Elocution, or Selections of Pieces in Prose and Verse for the Improvement of Youth in Reading and Speaking*, by William Scott, of Edinburgh. The book opens with short essays upon public speaking, the object of which should be to convey a 'pre-cise idea.' Scott urges simplicity and intelligence of gesture, distinctness of enunciation, right placing of emphasis, pausing at the end of one sentence before beginning the next, and other items of the technique of delivery.

Then come what the compiler calls 'Lessons in Reading,' beginning with five pages of maxims. Brief selections from the classics follow, mostly fables and parables, but including essays on points of character and conduct, with sketches of Alfred, Catiline, Cæsar, Elizabeth, and other historic characters. Excerpts from many poems are next; and then a good selection of pieces for recitation, including parts of speeches by the Earl of Chatham, Lord Mansfield, Cicero, and Demosthenes, as well as the imaginary addresses of Hannibal and other commanders to their armies. Hamlet's advice to the players is printed as prose, as is the appeal of Brutus after Cæsar's death, Hotspur's soliloquy, and Falstaff's praise of sack. Antony's Oration, Hamlet's analysis of death, and the exhortations of Henry V before Harfleur and Agincourt, are given. Short and pointed quotations are made illustrative of various forms of speech — antithesis, climax, enunciation, query, and the like.

Lincoln is known to have studied the *Kentucky Preceptor*, a compilation by an unknown hand and not unlike Scott's *Lessons* in general contents. It contained short essays on Credulity, Haughtiness, Industry, and Indulgence; one on Liberty and

<sup>1</sup> Lamon, 37.

Slavery, but without reference to negro slavery as then found in the United States; anecdotes of Indians; Gouverneur Morris's Funeral Oration 'over the corpse' of General Hamilton, and also Eliphalet Nott's oration on Hamilton; Nott's Baccalaureate Sermon in Union College, May 1, 1805; Jefferson's inaugural speech, 1801; and scenes lifted from English playwrights and poets — all without indicating the author, except in one instance, where Thompson, the poet, is named. It was a school reader belonging to Josiah Crawford, of whom Lincoln borrowed it, and Mrs. Crawford, in giving the book to Herndon, stated that out of it 'Lincoln learned his speeches.'<sup>1</sup>

The other two books worthy of note, which are known to have been read by Lincoln while in Indiana, are Weems's *Life of Washington* and the same writer's *Life of Franklin*.<sup>2</sup> It has not been discovered where he got the *Life of Franklin*, but he borrowed Weems's *Washington* from Josiah Crawford, a young farmer of the neighborhood, who had brought the book with him from Kentucky. Abraham worked for Crawford, at times, having 'daubed' his fifteen feet square log cabin when the Crawfords arrived in 1824.<sup>3</sup> It seems that the youth left the book where rain injured it, a calamity of which he promptly told Crawford, who gave him the volume and he 'pulled fodder a day or two for it.'<sup>4</sup>

Just when Lincoln read these six books cannot be positively determined. Mrs. Josiah Crawford says that he read Weems's *Washington* in 1829, when he was twenty years of age,<sup>5</sup> and the likelihood is strong that he studied all the books named during his last four years in Indiana.

<sup>1</sup> This volume is in the collection of Oliver R. Barrett, of Chicago, with Herndon's note on its history. Herndon gave it, sometime before 1887, to J. E. Remsburg, of Oak Mills, Kan. It is the third edition published at Lexington, Ky., 1812, by Maccoun, Tiltford & Company.

<sup>2</sup> Statement of Wesley Hall to J. Edward Murr, in his 'Lincoln in Indiana,' *Indiana Magazine of History*, xiii, 325.

<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth Crawford's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.* In 1865, thirty-six years after Lincoln borrowed Weems's *Washington*, the Crawford library had grown to twelve or fifteen volumes, including two Bibles, four hymn books, *Great Events of America*, *Pioneers of the New West*, Grace Truman, and a small Webster's *Dictionary*. Herndon's account of his interview with Elizabeth Crawford, Sept. 16, 1865. Weik MSS.

<sup>5</sup> Elizabeth Crawford's statement. Weik MSS.



..midnight study by the log fire....



Such were the volumes, each of which it should be remembered Lincoln read so thoroughly that he could repeat, word for word, parts that best pleased him. 'When he came across a passage that struck him he would write it down on boards if he had no paper and keep it there till he did get paper, then he would rewrite it, look at it, repeat it. He had a copy-book, a kind of scrap-book in which he put down all things and thus preserved them.'<sup>1</sup>

At Rockport, where Abraham often went, he made the acquaintance of John Pitcher, the first resident attorney of Rockport, who afterwards became prosecuting attorney for Spencer County.<sup>2</sup> Pitcher had a good library which, as he declared sixty years later, included the 'standard works of that day,' as well as law books; and the use of this library was given to young Lincoln.<sup>3</sup> The youth also went to Boonville, some twelve or fourteen miles distant from the Lincoln cabin, and there saw the prosecuting attorney for Warrick County, John A. Brackenridge, who is said to have had an immense library for the time and place, consisting of at least four hundred and fifty-seven volumes.<sup>4</sup> Inference has been made that Lincoln borrowed many of these volumes and frequently visited the house of Brackenridge to read his books and take counsel of him; but no evidence is adduced to support these speculations or to show that the lawyer even knew the backwoods youth.<sup>5</sup>

Along with the pleasing fiction of midnight study by the log fire, we must dismiss the unhappy legend that Thomas Lincoln

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Lincoln's statement. Weik MSS.

The Act creating Spencer County provided that ten per cent from the sale of town lots should be used for the establishment and maintenance of a county library. But if this was done while Lincoln lived in Indiana it would appear that he never heard of such a store of books; for, says the historian of Spencer County, 'after 1820 Spencer County had, at Rockport, a public library of several hundred volumes of the standard works of the day. The name Lincoln does not once appear on the records as [a] borrower.' *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos., Ind.*, 273.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, 307.

<sup>3</sup> Pitcher's statement in O. C. Terry to Jesse W. Weik, July, 1888. Weik MSS.

<sup>4</sup> 'Lincoln's Boyhood in Indiana.' Roscoe Kiper, *Proceedings of Fourth Annual Conference on Indiana History*, 59-60. The size and importance of these libraries are the more striking, since lawyers in other parts of the State then relied wholly upon Espinasse's *Nisi Prius* and Peake's *Evidence*, which they carried with them when 'riding the circuit.' Smith, 19.

<sup>5</sup> See pages 90-1, *infra*.

interfered with Abraham's incessant reading. The father yielded to the influence of Sarah Lincoln, it appears, and did not disturb his son's devotion to books. 'As a usual thing,' says his wife, 'Mr. Lincoln never made Abe quit reading to do anything if he could avoid it. He would do it himself first . . . he himself felt the uses and necessities of education [and wanted] his boy Abraham to learn and he encouraged him to do it in all ways he could.' <sup>1</sup>

Sarah Lincoln makes the best case she can for her husband; but after Abraham had left the family in Illinois, the father's contempt for the studious habits of his son seems to have returned. 'I suppose Abe is still fooling hisself with eddication,' he complained to William G. Greene who chanced by what Greene calls the 'wretched abode' where Thomas and his wife lived in Coles County. 'I tried to stop it, but he has got that fool idea in his head, and can't be got out. Now I hain't got no eddication, but I get along far better than if I had;' and Thomas showed his visitor how he kept an account by making straight marks with a coal on a rafter and rubbing them out with a dish-rag: 'that thar's a heap better'n yer eddication.' <sup>2</sup> In Indiana, however, a boyhood companion of Lincoln, Wesley Hall, relates that, 'Old Tom couldn't read himself, but he wuz proud that Abe could, and many a time he'd brag about how smart Abe wuz to the folks around about.' <sup>3</sup>

Young Lincoln liked to tell what he knew — insisted on telling it. In fact, self-expression was indispensable to the youth, and he became a very geyser of loquacity, talking incessantly to all who would listen — and most were eager to hear him. For he never bored anybody. His talk was informing, to be sure; but it was witty too and full of humor. Nobody could resist his funny

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Lincoln's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>2</sup> Whitney, I, 74-5.

<sup>3</sup> Hall's statement to Murr: *Indiana Magazine of History*, XIII, 325.

Hall's statement is somewhat dramatic, including a picturesque account of his having been lost in a snow-storm while riding home from mill, his chancing on the Lincoln cabin where he was warmly welcomed and stayed all night, Abraham reading, at his father's request, until bedtime and by the light of the log fire, the *Life of Franklin*. Hall gave this description to Mr. Murr more than sixty years after the incident happened, and when Hall was over eighty years old. Murr sets down the narrative exactly as he received it. While it is, obviously, strongly colored by Hall's imagination, as are most stories of the kind, there can be no reasonable doubt that something of the sort happened and that Lincoln surely did read a *Life of Franklin*.



stories, and he was as fond of jokes as he was of reading. Yet Mrs. Lincoln relates that when neighbors came to visit her: 'Abe . . . was a silent and attentive observer, never speaking or asking questions till they were gone and then he must understand everything — even to the smallest thing, minutely and exactly: he would then repeat it over to himself again and again, sometimes in one form and then in another and when it was fixed in his mind to suit him he became easy and he never lost that fact or his understanding of it. Sometimes he seemed pestered to give expression to his views and got mad almost at one who couldn't explain plainly what he wanted to convey.'<sup>1</sup> Dennis Hanks recalls that Abraham was 'a good listener to his superiors, bad to his inferiors — that is he couldn't endure jabber.'<sup>2</sup>

He was abnormally gregarious and, when not lost in the pages of some book, made shift to be where other people were, the larger the number the better he was pleased. Yet he did not seek crowds — indeed he shunned them, another of those contradictions of character which so often perplex the student of Lincoln, as they perplexed those who came in contact with him throughout his perplexing life.

Still he went to all the social gatherings — 'always attended house raisings, log rolling corn shucking and workings of all kinds.'<sup>3</sup> There was a small prairie on the South Fork of Pigeon Creek and there members of the local militia gathered for muster.<sup>4</sup> Lincoln was always on hand at these jolly assemblages. And no other person in the now comparatively well populated settlement was so welcome everywhere, for he always was cheerful and tried to make others happy too.<sup>5</sup> No situation was too gloomy for his fun-making, no man so sour that Lincoln

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Lincoln's statement. Weik MSS. It is obvious that there is much more of Herndon than there is of Sarah Lincoln in this interview. Herndon notes on the MS. that, at first, he had great difficulty in getting her to talk. The gossip of neighbors could have given the boy little food for questioning or thought, being, as such talk always was, chiefly about crops or hunting.

<sup>2</sup> Hanks's Charleston statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>3</sup> Grigsby to Herndon, Oct. 25, 1865. Weik MSS.

<sup>4</sup> Hanks to Herndon, April, 1866. Weik MSS. And see Welby: Thwaites, XII, 272; Turpie, 31.

<sup>5</sup> Grigsby to Herndon, Oct. 25, 1865; and Hanks's Charleston statement. Weik MSS.

could not make him laugh. Once with his father, he took produce to Troy in the all-wood wagon they had made for James Gentry. Heavy rain came on, the creek was swollen; drenched and cold, they staid all night at the house of J. W. Lamar. During the night wolves took nearly all the venison hams; but Abraham poked fun at the predicament and kept Lamar, who 'scarcely ever smiled,' rocking with laughter.<sup>1</sup>

Always he was surrounded by men and boys shouting with glee at his drollery, held by his charm, instructed by his information, interested in his reasoning. 'When he appeared in Company the boys would gather and cluster around him to hear him talk,' says Grigsby. 'He made fun and cracked his jokes making all happy.' Then, too, he 'naturally assumed the leadership of the boys.' But he was never dogmatic, it appears, never aggressive in his views, never turbulent or offensive in stating them, never insistent that others should think as he thought. 'He wounded no man's feelings' and even his jokes 'were at no man's expense.'<sup>2</sup> He was so good-natured that, coming on some boys stealing watermelons which Lincoln had raised, he 'sat down with us,' relates one of the culprits, 'cracked jokes, told stories and helped to eat the melons.'<sup>3</sup> All testify to Lincoln's honesty, too, and his absolute truthfulness. 'Men would swear on his simple word,' declares Joseph C. Richardson.

But 'Abe did not go much with the girls . . . didnt like girls much, too frivolous,' says Mrs. Allen Gentry, then Anna C. Roby, who saw as much of Lincoln at that time as any girl in the settlement except, of course, his sister and step-sisters.<sup>4</sup> His step-mother confirms Mrs. Gentry's opinion, saying: 'He was not very fond of girls.'<sup>5</sup> Joseph C. Richardson also relates that Abraham 'never seemed to care for the girls;'<sup>6</sup> and David Turnham bears witness that 'he did not seem to seek the company of the girls and when with them was rather backward.'<sup>7</sup> The girls liked him, however, because he was 'friendly, somewhat sociable,

<sup>1</sup> Hobson, 24.

<sup>2</sup> Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>3</sup> Richardson's statement, Sept. 14, 1865. Weik MSS.

<sup>4</sup> Mrs. Gentry's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>5</sup> Mrs. Lincoln's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>6</sup> Richardson's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>7</sup> Turnham to Herndon, Dec. 17, 1866. Weik MSS.

not so much so as we wanted him.' Certainly there was nothing attractive in Abraham's appearance, for he was 'a long, thin, leggy, gawky boy dried up and shriveled.'<sup>1</sup> Even by his sixteenth year he was '6 feet high' and 'bony and raw, dark skinned.'<sup>2</sup>

Lincoln began to make speeches as early as his fifteenth year.<sup>3</sup> He would mount a tree stump, or stand upon a fence and talk to his fellow workers, who would leave their jobs in fields or woods to listen. 'His father would come and make him quit, send him to work,' says his step-sister who saw and heard these incidents.<sup>4</sup> Her mother tells us the same thing. 'His father had to make him quit sometimes, as he would quit his own work to speak and made the other children as well as the men quit their work.'<sup>5</sup>

Of greater moment, however, than the fact that he made them at all, was the arrangement of his speeches and the style of his delivery. Considering the examples of exclamatory and emotional oratory furnished by preachers, lawyers, and candidates to whom he listened, the most reasonable explanation of young Lincoln's method and manner of speaking, is that he had taken Scott's *Lessons* seriously and that the advice of the Scotch schoolmaster was in harmony with his own thoughts on the subject. For all who heard him make these backwoods speeches, lay emphasis on the logical clearness of them and Lincoln's composure in delivery.

'He was calm, logical and clear alw[a]ys,' Dennis Hanks told Herndon.<sup>6</sup> Grigsby says the same thing; and adds that he 'was figurative in his Speeches, talk and conversation. He argued much from analogy and explained things hard for us to understand by stories, maxims, tales and figures. He would almost always point the lesson or idea by some story that was plain and near us that we might instantly see the force and bearing of what he said.'<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Gentry's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>2</sup> Richardson's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>3</sup> John Hanks to Herndon, June 13, 1865; and Mrs. Moore's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>4</sup> Mrs. Moore's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>5</sup> Mrs. Lincoln's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>6</sup> Hanks's Charleston statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>7</sup> Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS.



The clearness and simplicity of these youthful speeches, so striking that all made note of and remembered those qualities, were partly the result of his writing and rewriting what he read and thought. Sometimes he wrote essays on weighty subjects. William Wood, then about forty-five years of age,<sup>1</sup> relates that one such paper, written in 1827 or 1828, was on 'national politics,' saying that 'the American government was the best form of Government in the world for an intelligent people, that it ought to be kept sacred and preserved forever; that general education should [be] fostered and carried all over the country; that the constitution should be [held] sacred, the union perpetuated, and the laws revered, respected and enforced.'<sup>2</sup>

Wood was so impressed by the essay that he gave it to the leading lawyer of Spencer County. 'I showed it to John Pitcher who was travelling over the circuit on law business and stopped at my house one night: he read it carefully and asked me where I got it. I told him that one of my neighbor boys wrote it: he couldn't believe it until I told him that Abe did write it. . . . Pitcher said to me "the world cant beat it." He begged for it — gave it to him and it was published.'<sup>3</sup>

Wood was a member of the United Brethren Church and a foe of hard drinking.<sup>4</sup> He was a subscriber for a temperance paper published in Ohio; and 'Abe used to borrow it, take it home and read it and talk it over with me. . . . One day Abe wrote a piece on Temperance and brought it to my house. I read it carefully over and over and the piece excelled for sound sense anything that my paper contained. I gave the article to one Aaron Farmer, a Baptist Preacher: He read it, it struck him: he said he wanted it to send to a Temperance paper in Ohio for publication: it was sent and published. I saw the printed piece, read it . . . over and over again.'<sup>5</sup>

One outstanding fact of Lincoln's life at this time is that, although his associates, and indeed everybody, drank a great deal of whisky, Abraham seldom touched liquor. To be sure he 'did drink his dram as well as all others did, preachers and Christians

<sup>1</sup> Wood died Dec. 28, 1867. Hobson, 52.

<sup>2</sup> Wood's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* Unfortunately Wood could not remember 'what paper it got into.'

<sup>4</sup> Hobson, 51-2.

<sup>5</sup> Wood's statement. Weik MSS.

included,' testifies Grigsby; <sup>1</sup> and his devoted friend and mentor, William Wood, reluctantly admits that 'Abe once drank as all people did here at that time.' <sup>2</sup> But this slight and casual drinking seems to have been entirely for the sake of comradeship and Lincoln's strong dislike of offending anybody. <sup>3</sup> Equally striking is the fact that, although profanity was general and intense, Lincoln never fell into that habit. 'I never knew him to swear,' testifies Wood; 'he would say to . . . other boys, leave off your boyish ways and be more like men.' Wood explains this attitude by concluding that 'Abe was always a man though a boy.' <sup>4</sup>

Yet, as we have seen, he was no prig; instead he was inordinately sociable, even familiar, and had faults extremely human, such as his love of a certain type of anecdote — a taste which he never overcame and the expression of which, as will appear, was so marked a feature of his manhood and so shocking to the eminent men among whom he did his historic work. Some of his boyhood companions got hold of a joke book; and, relates Nathaniel Grigsby, Abraham 'would read it to us out in the woods on Sunday.' Answering the question as to the title Grigsby says: '[I remember it] mighty well. It was the King's Jester — it was a book of funny stories.' <sup>5</sup> This little volume, *Quinn's Jest*s, contained the stories and repartee of the English actor, James Quinn. The humor is heavy, the so-called jests

<sup>1</sup> Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>2</sup> Wood's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>3</sup> Lamont, 57.

<sup>4</sup> Wood's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>5</sup> Statement of Nathaniel Grigsby to William Fortune and General James C. Veatch in 1881, and by Mr. Fortune to the author, August 13, 1924.

Mr. Fortune, then a youth, had written a history of Warrick County, and accompanied General Veatch from Rockport, Ind., to Gentryville, to gather material for a book on Lincoln in Indiana, which General Veatch was preparing to write.

They talked with Nathaniel Grigsby, among others, who, after naming the books read by Lincoln as given in the biographies, said: 'There was another book that we boys got a lot of fun out of,' and in answer to questions, gave the account set out in the text.

Careful and prolonged search failed to discover such a book as 'The King's Jester.' Among the books of jests in the British Museum was found, *Quinn's Jest*s or the *Facetious Man's Pocket Companion, Containing every species of Wit, Humor and Repartee, with a Complete Collection of Epigrams, Bonmots, etc.*, published in London in 1766.

In the opinion of J. Christian Bay, of the John Crerar Library, Chicago, and of other experts, this is the book read by Lincoln to his boyhood companions in the woods of Spencer County, Indiana. J. Christian Bay to William Fortune, Nov. 5, 1922.

The conversion of *Quinn's Jest*s into the 'King's Jester' is still another illustration of that careless pronunciation which prevailed among the pioneers.

often indecent and sometimes so filthy that they cannot now be reproduced.

In his seventeenth year his sister Sarah, then aged nineteen, married Aaron Grigsby,<sup>1</sup> son of a farmer and one of the important men in the settlement. Even then social distinctions were sharply drawn and upon the lines of property; and the Grigsbys were of the aristocracy of the backwoods. Abraham composed some doggerel in verse, which, it is said, was sung at the wedding by 'the Lincoln family.' It was a clumsy rhyme, telling, in eight verses, the story of the creation and marriage of Adam and Eve.

This bridal hymn of Sarah Lincoln argued that since woman was not made of man's feet he must not abuse her; nor should she 'rule him,' not having been taken from his head; but that he must protect her because 'she was taken from under Adam's arm.'<sup>2</sup> At the noisy wedding or thereafter, the Grigsby family did or said something which was strongly offensive to Lincoln. Thus was laid the materials of a feud, which was to be set blazing by a harsh circumstance two years later.

But in the meantime he adventured far, though briefly, into the world beyond the fifty-mile circuit of the Pigeon Creek settlement. He had seen something of river life, having been hired in 1825 by one James Taylor to help run a ferry boat across the Ohio from near the mouth of Anderson Creek.<sup>3</sup> Taylor had a farm, too, and when Lincoln was not taking travelers across the river, he ploughed, made fences, ground corn on the hand mill, and at 'hog killing time,' helped nearby farmers

<sup>1</sup> Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS. Also Hobson, 21. She was married in August, 1826. Chapman's Narrative. Weik MSS. The records of Spencer Co. show that the day was August 2.

On Sept. 13, 1826 (Marriage Register, Spencer Co., Ind.), 'Squire' Hall, married Mrs. Lincoln's youngest daughter, Matilda Johnston, and lived thenceforth in the Lincoln cabin. 'Squire' Hall, or Levi, Jr., was the son of Levi Hall and Nancy Hanks, mother of Dennis Hanks.

<sup>2</sup> Herndon, 1, 48-9. This song and the account of it as stated in the text, were given in 1866 by Mrs. Josiah Crawford, who was at Sarah Lincoln's wedding. She says that Lincoln used to sing it and that it was 'sung at abrahams sisters wedding. I do not know a linkern composed this song or not the first that I ever heard it was the linkern family sung it I rather think A L composed it him self but I am not certain. I know that he was in the habit of makeing songs and singing of them.' Elizabeth Crawford to Herndon, May 3, 1866. Weik MSS.

<sup>3</sup> Green B. Taylor's statement, Sept. 16, 1865; and that of Richardson, Weik MSS. Also Herndon, 1, 60.



as well as Taylor — wielding the club, sousing the dead swine in barrels of scalding water, scraping the bristles and other incidents in the process.<sup>1</sup> As ferryman and farmer Abraham was paid six dollars a month, and as hog killer thirty-one cents a day in addition.<sup>2</sup>

Lincoln also built for himself a scow in which he would take travellers to passing steamers hailed in midstream. Another ferryman, John T. Dill, a Kentuckian, angered by this competition, haled Lincoln before a Kentucky Justice of the Peace, Samuel Pate, for running a ferry without a license. Lincoln said that he did not know that it was against the law to take passengers to steamboats in midstream, especially when the ferryboat was on the other side and the steamers would not land or wait. The plaintiff pointed out, however, that the jurisdiction of Kentucky ran to low water mark on the Indiana shore. But 'Squire' Pate decided that taking persons to passenger craft in midstream, was not 'setting them over' the river and, therefore, that Lincoln had not violated the statute. Abraham was deeply impressed and, thereafter, went to this rural court when cases were heard and decided. In such fashion began Lincoln's interest in the study and practice of the law.<sup>3</sup>

But running a ferryboat now and then, across the Ohio, taking an infrequent traveller to a steamer, ploughing, splitting rails and killing hogs for Taylor and others, gave Lincoln little more experience of human activities than Pigeon Creek had afforded. Heavy toil was the only lasting impression made upon him, for long years afterward, when one of the leaders of the Illinois Bar, he told Herndon that it 'was the roughest work a young man could be made to do.'<sup>4</sup> The boisterous life of the keel boatmen did not appeal to him — their heavy and continuous drinking of raw whisky, their loud and picturesque boasting made good by reckless and bloody fighting, even their fiddling and clamorous, hearty good cheer<sup>5</sup> did not attract him.

<sup>1</sup> Taylor's statement. Weik MSS. And see *First of the Hoosiers*: George Cary Eggleston, 54-5.

<sup>2</sup> Taylor's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>3</sup> *Litigant*: Townsend, 34-9.

<sup>4</sup> Herndon, I, 61.

<sup>5</sup> For excellent description by an eye witness of the Ohio keel boatmen see 'Historical

In his nineteenth year, however, the chance was offered to make a far journey; and the opportunity came as the result of Lincoln's good fellowship and integrity, and the friendship and confidence inspired by these qualities. The richest man in Carter Township was James Gentry, a native of North Carolina who in April, 1818, had come from Kentucky with his young wife to the Pigeon Creek settlement. He entered a thousand acres of land and afterward bought several hundred acres more. He had a large family, two of whom married into the family of another wealthy man, Gideon W. Romine.<sup>1</sup> Gentry soon began to keep a small stock of goods for sale at his farm house; <sup>2</sup> thus began the town of Gentryville.<sup>3</sup> Soon William David, a blacksmith, came <sup>4</sup> and in time a few cabins were built near by. Gentryville became the social as well as the trading centre of the countryside.

Gentryville was less than a mile and a half from the Lincoln cabin; and to the backwoods hamlet young Lincoln would speed like a homing pigeon when work was done for the day. For there gathered other youth and men who craved companionship and the story-telling, talk, and discussion which took place in country stores. About this time, one, William Jones, came from Vincennes <sup>5</sup> and opened a little store. Soon he and Lincoln became fast friends and Jones hired the boy to help him. But it was the village blacksmith who was 'Abes pertickler friend.'<sup>6</sup> Gentry and Jones formed a partnership, with Abraham sometimes assisting as man of all work.

As long as Gentry or Jones would keep the candles lighted and the log fire burning, Abraham would remain, talking, forever talking, relating his jokes, telling his rude and often unsavory

Writings of Judge Samuel Wilkeson: ' *Pubs. Buffalo Hist. Socy.*, v, 179-81. See also Woods: Thwaites, x, 255. Sept. 18, 1821.

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos.*, Ind., 452, 558.

<sup>2</sup> In 1827 Gentry, who was very illiterate (Hobson, 24-5), took in as partners Gideon W. and Benjamin Romine, and opened a store at a crossing of the roads. 'Gentry started a cotton gin about 1824 . . . receiving patronage from a radius of thirty miles. Considerable cotton was raised. It grew well on new land.' *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos.*, Ind., 365-6.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, 366. It was not entered of record as a town, however, until 1854.

<sup>4</sup> *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos.*, Ind., 366.

<sup>5</sup> Hanks to Herndon, no date, Weik MSS.

<sup>6</sup> *Ib.*, and Hanks to Herndon, March 22, 1866.

tales; flashing his kindly repartee, propounding his theories about everything. 'He was so odd, original and humorous and witty that all the People in town would gather around him,' Dennis Hanks told Herndon. 'He would Keep them there till midnight or longer telling Stories [and] cracking jokes. . . . I would get tired, want to go home, cuss Abe most heartily.'<sup>1</sup> And 'Sumtimes we Spent a Little time at grog piching waits,' says Dennis.<sup>2</sup>

Lincoln had great physical strength, so great that tales of his performances are well-nigh unbelievable. Long afterward one elderly person recalled that the young Hercules of Pigeon Creek bore away easily heavy posts which 'some of the men' were preparing to carry by means of bars.<sup>3</sup> 'Abe could sink an axe deeper in wood . . . He could strike with a mall a heavier blow than any man I ever saw,' testifies William Wood.<sup>4</sup> Stature, physical power, good humor, intellect, integrity, are the outstanding features of the picture of Abraham Lincoln during these years.

In April, 1828, James Gentry hired this strong, capable, and trustworthy youth to go with his son, Allen, on a flatboat loaded with produce to New Orleans, then the best market for such things as the upper Mississippi country had to sell.<sup>5</sup> The boat started from Gentry's landing on the Ohio, about three quarters of a mile from Rockport.<sup>6</sup> Lincoln acted as a bow hand, 'working the foremost oar and was paid eight dollars per month from the time of starting to his returning home.'<sup>7</sup> It was no ignorant lout but a fairly well-informed young person of grasping and absorbing mind, who, with quip and quiddity, droll story and quaint common sense, enlivened the hours, as Gentry's flatboat floated down the Ohio and Mississippi to the great Southern mart.

<sup>1</sup> Hanks's Charleston statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>2</sup> Hanks to Herndon, March 22, 1866. Weik MSS.

<sup>3</sup> Richardson's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>4</sup> Wood's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>5</sup> These boats, made of the trunks of big poplar trees, were from sixty to eighty feet in length. Meat, corn, flour and the like made up the cargoes. Cockrum, 508-10. Allen Gentry was two years older than Lincoln.

<sup>6</sup> Mrs. Allen Gentry's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>7</sup> Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS.



..or a flatboat .....



Nothing happened, it seems, to disturb that placid voyage until one night, when tied to the shore at the plantation of a Madame Duchesne, not far from New Orleans, a company of negroes armed with hickory clubs and bent on plunder, came upon the flatboat when the occupants were asleep. Aroused by the noise, Lincoln seized a club and furiously attacked the marauders. He knocked several into the river and the others fled, Lincoln and Gentry in hot pursuit. They, too, were wounded, it appears, for they were bleeding when they got on board again. Also they feared that the negroes would return; so they 'hastily swung into the stream and floated down the river till daylight.'<sup>1</sup>

So came Abraham Lincoln to New Orleans, the first city and the first place bigger than the Boonville or Rockport, Indiana, of 1828, he had ever seen. It was then a remarkable city of narrow streets, foreign-built houses, with colored stuccoes and iron railings, broad avenues lined by handsome houses, a cathedral, and immense warehouses for receiving, pressing, and storing cotton. From the levee, a much used causeway, could be seen nearly two miles of various descriptions of vessels, arks and flatboats from the north, steamboats still giving a sense of novelty, three-masters for foreign trade, with their broadsides to the shore — expressing the growing commerce of the river and people and offering 'one of the most singularly beautiful' sights that could be conceived.

At the market, the common place of meeting, could be found nuts and fruits of the tropics; fish from lake and gulf; sugar, grain, and meats. Lincoln saw and heard the bustle and heaving labor on the river front, sea-going vessels made ready, crews of strange speech. He could note the medley of people and dress — French, Spanish, Mexicans, Creoles, even Indians, and slaves, from the full negro through many degrees of mixed blood.<sup>2</sup> It all gave a new experience to the two youths from the backwoods of Indiana, but there is no evidence of the impression made upon Lincoln by this, his second contact with slavery.

<sup>1</sup> Nicolay and Hay, I, 44; Herndon, I, 63; Hobson, 25; also Mrs. Gentry's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>2</sup> 'Lincoln was attacked by the Negroes — no doubt of this — Abe told me so.' Romine's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>2</sup> Latrobe, II, 330-4.

The cargo sold, the young men returned to their Indiana homes in June,<sup>1</sup> making the journey up stream on one of the big and sumptuous steamboats of the time, the elder Gentry paying the fare. On Pigeon Creek Lincoln took up again the old routine, unchanged in speech or manner by his trip to the metropolis of the South. He was still the avid reader of books, the incessant talker, the bubbling fountain of good cheer.

But Gentryville no longer satisfied him; he had caught a glimpse of the world beyond Pigeon Creek, beyond Rockport and Boonville. The spell of the river had stolen over him; he wanted to be 'a steamboat man' on a big river craft like the one on which he had returned from New Orleans. In 1829, relates William Wood, 'Abe came to my house one day, and stood round about timid and shy. I knew he wanted something. I said to him, "Abe what is your care?" Abe replied, "Uncle, I want you to go to the River (the Ohio) and give me some recommendation to some boat." I remarked, "Abe, your age is against you. You are not 21 yet." "I know that, but I want a start," said Abe. I concluded not to go for the boys good.' <sup>2</sup>

So he stayed on at the Pigeon Creek cabin, doing the familiar work of the backwoods farm, felling trees, splitting rails, ploughing fields, helping Thomas Lincoln now and then in his casual carpentering. But he read and wrote more than ever, and lost no opportunity to hear speeches, especially legal arguments. When court was held in Rockport on the Ohio or at Boonville, county seats of Spencer and Warrick counties respectively, Lincoln would go,<sup>3</sup> making careful notes of all that was said and done.

These towns were mere villages, Boonville having some twenty cabins in which dwelt, perhaps, ninety or one hundred men, women, and children; and Rockport was but little larger. Evansville was then scarcely more important. The roads were well-nigh impassable except on foot or horseback, being mere open-

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Gentry's statement. Weik MSS.

It took about two months to make the trip. Romine's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>2</sup> Wood's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>3</sup> Hanks's Charleston statement. Weik MSS.



ings through the woods.<sup>1</sup> Business before the courts at these county seats consisted mostly, as we have seen, of criminal and divorce cases. Suits for debt or on contract were trifling; but they were contested stoutly with much argument by the lawyers, some of whom wore queues tied in eelskins.<sup>2</sup> Lincoln listened to the wrangling and speeches of these legal combatants and attracted the notice of at least two of them.

As we have seen, one of these was John Pitcher of Rockport, with whom, according to Pitcher, the youth wanted to study law; but 'his father was too poor to spare him away from the farm and the mill.'<sup>3</sup> Near Boonville lived John A. Brackenridge

<sup>1</sup> In southern Indiana the roads were so indistinct that travellers often were lost. Esarey, 246.

The road through Indiana to Cincinnati was too bad for ordinary travel. Fordham, 152.

As late as 1823 even between Richmond and Indianapolis, the road was little more than a trail. Coffin, 81.

In 1826 there were only Indian trails through the forests from Randolph County to Fort Wayne. O. H. Smith, 81 (*infra*).

Even as late as 1847, the roads in Wayne County, perhaps the best in the state, were 'almost impassable.' Coffin, 50. And see Welby: Thwaites, xii, 213. Near New Harmony, Welby found roads impassable in the spring. *Ib.*, 267.

As late as 1835 a Methodist circuit-rider describes the road from Ohio to Indianapolis as 'terrible.' Brunson: *Wis. Hist. Coll.*, xv, 270-1.

<sup>2</sup> Smith, 6, 130.

Examples of litigation at that time, as given by Judge Smith in his *Early Indiana Trials and Sketches*, are stealing a log chain, hog stealing, slander, assault, libel, murder, malpractice and the like. There were few cases for debt, but those were fought long and hard.

At Connersville, Ind., in 1820, Isaac Jones sued Edward Harper for twenty-five cents, the price of some beef Harper had bought from Jones. In the court of the Justice of the Peace several juries disagreed. When, after many trials, a jury agreed, appeal was taken to the Circuit Court, where again there were several 'hung juries.'

At the final trial, all Fayette County turned out en masse. Jones had four lawyers, Harper three; and the argument lasted two days. The jury was out all night and in the morning returned a verdict for Harper because the beef had made his family sick. The costs now amounted to \$1100, to pay which Jones sold his farm; and the payment of Harper's lawyers bankrupted that stubborn litigant. *Ib.*, 11.

The people were extraordinarily litigious: 'I have known a lawsuit brought for a piggin or pail, of the value of 25 cents.' Woods: Thwaites, x, 317.

Attending court was a principal means of diversion; and the settlers gathered in throngs at trials which, sometimes, were conducted as much to please the hearers as to try the case. 'If the court please,' began a lawyer at a trial, when he was stopped by the presiding judge who gravely answered, 'Yes, we do please. . . . The people have come in to hear the lawyers plead.' Smith, 7.

In a suit for slander between two doctors, one an Allopathic and the other a 'root doctor,' there were five lawyers on each side and the trial lasted more than a week. *Ib.*, 12-3.

<sup>3</sup> Pitcher's statement to O. C. Terry, in Terry to Jesse W. Weik, July, 1888. Weik

who is said to have been an advocate of unusual brilliancy. In 1828 at a trial of note when Brackenridge was prosecutor of Warrick County, young Lincoln was present, and paid such 'calm intelligent attention' to the proceedings that Brackenridge observed it. When the trial was over Abraham went up to the lawyer, praised his speech to the jury as a 'clear, logical and powerful effort;' but Brackenridge, who won the case,<sup>1</sup> merely 'looked at the shabby boy.'<sup>2</sup>

Thus by reading, listening, absorbing, Abraham's knowledge grew. 'How did Lincoln and yourself learn so much in Indiana under such disadvantages?' Herndon diplomatically asked Dennis Hanks. The answer is the best explanation yet given. 'We learned by sight, scent and hearing. We heard all that was said and talked over and over the questions heard, wore them slick, greasy and threadbare.'<sup>3</sup> This fact must be borne in mind as we follow Lincoln through his remaining years in Indiana.

January 20, 1828, Sarah Grigsby died in child-birth,<sup>4</sup> and Abraham, grieving sorely, blamed Aaron Grigsby and the Grigsby family for his sister's death, which, declares J. W.

MSS. Pitcher says that Thomas Lincoln had built and ran a horse mill for the grinding of corn; but since those who knew the Lincoln family and lived near their cabin make no mention of such a mill and there is no other account of it, the probabilities are that Pitcher's recollection of it is inaccurate. He made the statement to Terry in the summer of 1888, at least sixty years after Abraham Lincoln came to his office in Rockport. At that time Pitcher was old and very deaf.

<sup>1</sup> It was not easy to secure convictions for murder, and when culprits were found guilty the people often petitioned for pardons. Smith, 8-9, 23.

<sup>2</sup> Statement of S. T. Johnson, Sept. 14, 1865. Weik MSS. Johnson was present at this trial and saw and heard what he relates. He says that he often saw Lincoln at the Warrick County Court at Boonville. Johnson is also the authority for the statement that, when Brackenridge saw Lincoln at Washington in 1862, the President 'instantly recognized' the lawyer whom he had not seen for thirty-four years, and assured him that it was at the Boonville trial that Lincoln 'formed a fixed determination to study the law and make that his profession;' and that the President told Brackenridge that his speech at the murder trial 'was the best speech that I, up to that time, ever heard. If I could, as I then thought make as good a speech as that, that my soul would be satisfied.' *Ib.*

Presumably Johnson had this story from Brackenridge, though in what way we are not informed. Brackenridge moved to Texas in 1852 or 1853. See 'John A. Brackenridge': Raleigh, in *Proceedings Southwestern Indiana Historical Socy.*, Oct., 1922, 60. Johnson also says that the trial was of a 'murder case'; but the court records of Warrick County show that no such case was tried in 1828.

<sup>3</sup> Hanks's Charleston statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>4</sup> The baby was stillborn. Chapman's narrative. Weik MSS.

Lamar, 'Abe always thought was due to neglect.'<sup>1</sup> Thus was ignited the antagonism which, it seems, had been slowly though silently accumulated since Sarah's marriage two years before.

In the spring of 1829<sup>2</sup> two sons of Reuben Grigsby, Reuben, Jr., and Charles, were married. Lincoln was not invited to the wedding, nor yet to the infare which was held at the mansion of the elder Grigsby, a house of two stories built of hewed logs.<sup>3</sup> In hot resentment, he contrived through a confederate a confusion of brides and grooms after the festivities, to be corrected the moment the joke was known to the guests.<sup>4</sup>

With this incident for a text, he wrote a scurrilous description of it, entitling the screed 'The Chronicles of Reuben.' This he dropped at a place on the road 'carelessly, lost it as it were' and it was found by one of the Grigsby family.<sup>5</sup> It was anonymous, of course, but everybody knew who wrote it — nobody in the neighborhood but Lincoln could have written it. It was done in imitation of Old Testament narrative, and described the wedding and infare of the Grigsby boys, ending with a bold picture of the mix-up at the close of the merriment.

'The Chronicles' made a tremendous hit throughout the neighborhood.<sup>6</sup> Gossip on swift wings, carried the story of the marital misadventure all over the countryside. Coarse though the satire was, everybody talked about the salacious description; some committed the whole of it to memory and were able to repeat it as long as they lived.<sup>7</sup> Joseph C. Richardson proudly

<sup>1</sup> Lamar's statement: Hobson, 24. Rhoda M. Coffin records that, even in the best-conditioned families and in the most highly educated communities women frequently were badly injured by ignorant treatment at child-birth and thereafter 'blistered . . . causing indescribable suffering.' Coffin, 61.

<sup>2</sup> April 15 or 16, 1829.

<sup>3</sup> Hobson, 26.

<sup>4</sup> Richardson's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.*

<sup>6</sup> Hobson, 28-9.

<sup>7</sup> Herndon, I, 51-4. Herndon got the 'Chronicles of Reuben' in 1865 from the wife of Josiah Crawford. She repeated it from memory to her son, S. A. Crawford, who wrote it out for Herndon. S. A. Crawford to Herndon, Jan. 4, 1866. Weik MSS.

Nathaniel Grigsby wrote Herndon that the copy Herndon secured was 'correctly written.' Grigsby to Herndon, Oct. 25, 1865. Weik MSS. And see Hobson, 28-9.

'Lincoln did write what is called the book of chronicles, a satire on the Grigsbys.' Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS.

'The thing happened about as Mr. Herndon heard it. My father-in-law told the story to me and my wife often. My wifes father was a brother to the old lady Grigsby, and was at the infair when the thing happened.' John W. Lamar to J. W. Whartmann of Evansville, Jan. 3, 1887. Weik MSS.



relates that 'this poem . . . is remembered here in Indiana in Scraps better than the Bible, better than Watts hymns . . . this [was] the first production that I know of that made us feel that Abe was truly and really *game*. This called the attention of the People to Abe intellectually.' <sup>1</sup>

But the success of his trick and Hudibrastic lines did not satisfy Lincoln — he must further castigate the Grigsbys, although they and their friends were already 'fighting mad.' <sup>2</sup> Lincoln wrote a rhyme about another brother, William Grigsby, who appears to have been bald-headed, very ugly, and, judging from Lincoln's verses, was the butt of rude chaffing. This repellent rhyme was read and repeated as widely as 'The Chronicles of Reuben.' The meaning could be fully understood only by those who knew the incidents described. <sup>3</sup>

A fist fight was the only possible outcome of these attacks and such a fight took place; but Abraham did no fighting, except, perhaps, in the *mêlée* that followed. The details of the arrangement of this now famous contest are obscure and confused. All that is certainly known is that John D. Johnston, step-brother of Lincoln, had a savage fight with the outraged William Grigsby, and was soundly thrashed. It is said that Lincoln refused to meet Grigsby because the young giant was so much stronger than his offended opponent; and put Johnston forward in his place, an arrangement to which Grigsby agreed. <sup>4</sup> Another ver-

<sup>1</sup> Richardson's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>2</sup> This incident is made harder to understand by the attempt, long after the Herndon investigations, to lay upon John D. Johnston the blame for the matrimonial contretemps after the infare; and by the assertion that, almost immediately thereafter, Lincoln was on friendly terms with the elder Grigsby. Hobson, 27.

<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Crawford's statement; also Romine's statement. Weik MSS.

Herndon, I, 55, prints two verses, but not as they came to him, and Romine gives others, which are not worth repeating.

<sup>4</sup> Many years after Grigsby, Taylor, Elizabeth Crawford, and others wrote to and were interviewed by Herndon, a new version of the fight was given to Rev. J. Edward Murr by James and Joseph Gentry, Redmond Grigsby, and Wesley Hall, who said that Lincoln and William Grigsby quarrelled over the ownership of a spotted pup. Grigsby dared Lincoln to fight it out, Lincoln refused because he could 'lick' Grigsby and put up his step-brother instead, the winner to get the pup. Grigsby was beating Johnston badly when Lincoln 'bodily hurled him over the heads of the crowd,' daring 'the entire Grigsby crowd to come into him.' But they were afraid, and the incident ended with Lincoln 'laughing and joking.'

According to this tale it was thereafter, and because of this fight, that Lincoln was

sion is that, although there were 'seconds' for each combatant and general agreement that the ring about the fighters should not be broken, Lincoln burst through, dragged Grigsby off Johnston, threw him 'some feet' away, 'waved a bottle of whisky over his head and said he was the big buck of the lick' — whereupon this 'being a general invitation for a general fight they all pitched in and had quite a general fight.' <sup>1</sup> However, it was a notable fight and everybody came. Lincoln was undoubtedly present because it was his quarrel.<sup>2</sup>

As to what happened afterward, however, we have William Grigsby's own account as given directly to his brother Nathaniel Grigsby who, in a letter, repeated it to Herndon: 'my old brother W[illia]m Grigsby tells me some things that past betwin himself and Abraham Lincoln which i wil rite . . . after the fite between Wm. Grigsby and John D. Johnson Abraham told Wm. Grigsby that he had whiped Johnson but i can whip you but Wm told him that he did not dispute that but if he Lincoln would give him Grigsby a fair c[h]ance he would fite him he Lincoln wish to now how he wish to fite, Grigsby told Lincoln he would fite him a duel Lincoln told Grigsby that he Lincoln was not a going to fool his life away with one shot, so the mater stoped.' <sup>3</sup>

In the autumn of 1829 Thomas Lincoln resolved to leave Indiana for Illinois. After staying with the Lincolns in Indiana for four years, John Hanks had gone back to Kentucky and thence in 1828 to Macon County, Illinois.<sup>4</sup> He sent back to Thomas Lincoln and Dennis Hanks the usual reports of a new country.<sup>5</sup> Also the 'milk sickness' had come again or was ex-

not invited to the Grigsby wedding and infare which caused him to devise the prank described in the text and to write the 'Chronicles of Reuben.' By this later account, Lincoln is made to apologize to the Grigsbys, stating that he meant only to have some fun, and to deliver to them the manuscript of the 'Chronicles.' Murr, *Indiana Magazine of History*, xiv, 38-41.

<sup>1</sup> Taylor's and John Hoskins' statements. Weik MSS. Taylor was the son of James Taylor, who hired Lincoln to run the ferryboat across the Ohio and who acted as the 'second' to John D. Johnston in his fight with Grigsby. *Ib.*

<sup>2</sup> Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>3</sup> Grigsby to Herndon, Oct. 25, 1865. Weik MSS.

<sup>4</sup> John Hanks to Herndon, June 13, 1865. Weik MSS.

<sup>5</sup> *Decatur* (Ill.) *Republican*, July 13, 1890.

...dragged Grisby off Johnston....



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pected.<sup>1</sup> So Thomas and Sarah Lincoln sold the Johnston lot in Elizabethtown, Kentucky, for one hundred and twenty-three dollars to Thomas J. Wathen,<sup>2</sup> going to Elizabethtown to execute the deed and get the money. After their return to Indiana they spent the winter of 1829-30 in making ready for the journey. Two years earlier Thomas Lincoln had succeeded in getting a patent for half of the one hundred and sixty acres which he originally had entered.<sup>3</sup> This eighty acres he now sold to James Gentry.<sup>4</sup> During the winter of 1829-30 Lincoln also sold what live-stock he had, and bought two yoke of oxen and a stout wagon for his journey westward.

Nor did the pious Thomas neglect to equip himself with a certification of church membership and regularity, although, seem-

<sup>1</sup> Hanks to Herndon, March 7, 1866. Weik MSS. Dennis gives different reasons for leaving Indiana: 'Thomas Lincoln hearing of the rich Prairies of Illinois already cleared up and prepared for the plow decided to go.' Hanks's first Chicago statement. Weik MSS. On the other hand, says Hanks: 'The Reason is this we were perplexed by a Disease called Milk Sick my Self Being the oldest I was Determined to Leave and hunt a Country where the milk was not I married his oldest Step Daughter I Sold out and they concluded to go with me . . . My wife's mother could not think of parting with her and we Ripped up Stakes and Started to Illinois.' Hanks to Herndon, March 7, 1866. Weik MSS.

<sup>2</sup> Records Hardin County, Deed Book C, 219.

<sup>3</sup> The patent, signed by J. Q. Adams, then President, for eighty acres, is dated June 6, 1827. Records Land Office, Interior Department. The patent was secured by releases and application of payments, a method often adopted by poor settlers. The Act of July 21, 1821, extending time for payments granted a discount of thirty-seven and one-half per cent when full payment was promptly made; but Lincoln could not get the money. December 22, 1818, one Charles Whiting had entered eighty acres in Posey County, Ind., paying the first installment of \$80; and he assigned his interest to the heirs of one Memorial Forrest, whose guardian, James McCrery, got an order of court, April 2, 1827, to sell this interest. Three days later, at Vincennes, McCrery assigned it to Thomas Lincoln who, April 30, 1827, relinquished it to the government, and was allowed credit for the \$80 that Whiting had paid on it.

At the same time Lincoln sold by relinquishment, the east half of the 160 acres he had entered in 1817, to James Gentry, who promptly paid the government cash for the remainder of the purchase price. How much Gentry paid Lincoln is unknown. The money which he had paid on this half ten years before was promptly credited to the balance due on the remaining eighty acres. Thus, full payment for half of his original entry having been made, Lincoln received his patent. Gen. Land Office Records, Interior Department. A brochure on this transaction has been prepared by George R. Wickham, Assistant Commissioner of the General Land Office, upon which, as well as upon the official records, I have relied.

This is the most extensive and complicated transaction in which Thomas Lincoln ever was engaged, and it suggests the resourceful business mind of James Gentry.

<sup>4</sup> The records of Spencer County having been destroyed in 1831, the amount paid Lincoln for the unproductive little farm is unknown, but probably was somewhat more than the \$80 Lincoln paid the government for it.

ingly, as sour fruitage of Abe's feud with the Grigsbys, there was difficulty in obtaining it. On December 12, 1829, Little Pigeon Creek Church granted a 'letter of dismission' to Lincoln and his wife, which was recalled on the objection of Mrs. Nancy Grigsby that they were unworthy of such credential. The row must have been settled between the parties for, a month later, January 10, 1830, Thomas was appointed on a committee to settle a quarrel between two sisters of the congregation. Since this, the only distinction ever accorded him, was just before he left Indiana forever, it would seem to have been a sort of churchly emollient and farewell. However, Lincoln had been a generous contributor, having once given twenty-four pounds of meal to church support.<sup>1</sup>

During the last two years spent in Indiana a change of far-reaching results began to come over Abraham Lincoln. Although most people in Carter township were National Republicans and supporters of Henry Clay,<sup>2</sup> Thomas Lincoln and his family were Democrats and followers of Andrew Jackson<sup>3</sup> as, indeed, were most poor people.<sup>4</sup> Abraham, too, was a Jackson man — a 'Jackson Democrat,' as Dennis Hanks asserts with emphasis.<sup>5</sup> Political campaigns had invaded Spencer and Warlick Counties, and, by 1828, had become heated.<sup>6</sup> For some years political handbills had been scattered through the settlements and, recently, stump speakers had enlivened backwoods gatherings.

<sup>1</sup> Records Little Pigeon Creek Baptist Church, MS. March 10, 1828.

<sup>2</sup> The earliest records are for the Presidential election of 1832 when thirteen votes were cast for Jackson in Carter township and eighteen for Clay; in 1836, fourteen votes were cast for Van Buren, Democrat, and twenty for Harrison, Whig; in 1840, thirty-five for Harrison and six for Van Buren. The township continued strongly Whig and Republican until 1876 when Tilden carried it by three votes. In 1856 the American (anti-foreign) party cast fifty-four votes to twenty-five for the Republicans and sixty-five for the Democrats. In 1860 the vote was one hundred twenty-four for Lincoln, seventy-six for Douglas, eighteen for Bell and Everett and one for Breckinridge. *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos., Ind.*, 299-305.

<sup>3</sup> Hanks's Charleston statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>4</sup> Yet Nathaniel Grigsby says that 'we were all Jackson boys and men at that time in Indiana;' and the Grigsbys were comparatively rich. Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>5</sup> Such men were violently intolerant, voting for or against local candidates solely because those candidates supported or opposed Jackson. Smith, 81.

<sup>6</sup> As illustrative of the habits of the time, it is of interest to note that, even in com-

Lincoln's friend, William Jones, the store-keeper in Gentryville, who was a staunch Republican, took the *Louisville Journal* and, perhaps, one or two other newspapers.<sup>1</sup> William Wood, too, was a Republican, and, as we have seen, he also took newspapers published at Cincinnati.<sup>2</sup> In these newspapers the speeches of Clay and other public men were printed, and able editorial comment made upon them as well as upon all the questions of the day. Much was reproduced from the Eastern press also, particularly that of New England and Philadelphia. The *Louisville Journal* was violently opposed to Jackson and fervently supported Clay.

Lincoln read these papers<sup>3</sup> to as much purpose as he read books. 'Abe read the newspapers . . . at least such as I took,' Wood told Herndon; frequently borrowed the *Telescope*, which Wood took from 1825 to 1830.<sup>4</sup> From 1824 to 1830, says Mrs. Lincoln, 'newspapers were [to be] had' and 'Abe was a constant reader of them. I am sure of this for the years of 1827-28-29-30.'<sup>5</sup> To everybody he met and wherever he went, he told all he read; he became 'a kind of newsboy' of the vicinity, says Hanks.<sup>6</sup>

In the Presidential campaign of 1828 the National Republican candidate was John Quincy Adams, then President; the Democratic candidate was Andrew Jackson. The outstanding issues were Jackson's wrongs in 1824, when the House of Representatives elected Adams, internal improvements, a protective tariff — 'the American system,' as Henry Clay called it — and the Bank of the United States as fiscal agent of the government and the supervisor of a stable currency. Discussion of these ques-

munities priding themselves on superior morality, candidates who were successful at elections had to treat everybody to whisky. *Recollections*: Harris, 63-4.

<sup>1</sup> William Jones was born at Vincennes, Ind., Jan. 5, 1800, and lived there until, in his twenty-seventh year, he went to Gentryville. He had much influence on Lincoln's early life. He enlisted as a Union soldier at the outbreak of the Civil War, rose to be Colonel of his regiment, the 53rd Indiana Volunteer Infantry, and was killed in action at Atlanta, Georgia, July 22, 1864. Hobson, 34. The *Louisville Journal*, founded in 1831 by George D. Prentice, was the leading paper in the West.

<sup>2</sup> Wood's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>3</sup> Hobson, 34.

<sup>4</sup> Wood's statement. Weik MSS. The *Telescope* was a religious weekly, published in New York City from 1824 to 1830, and perhaps later, and edited by W. Beach.

<sup>5</sup> Mrs. Lincoln's statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>6</sup> Hanks in Charleston statement. Weik MSS.



tions on the stump and in the newspapers was forthright and within the range of popular understanding and credibility.<sup>1</sup> Ratliff Boone was a candidate for Representative in Congress from that district and made speeches which Lincoln undoubtedly heard; but since Boone was an ardent Democrat and aggressive supporter of Jackson, it would appear that he did not greatly influence Lincoln.<sup>2</sup>

We 'went to political and other speeches and gatherings. . . . We would hear all sides and opinions talk them over, discuss them agreeing or disagreeing,' relates Dennis Hanks, and continues in disgust: 'Abe turned Whig in 1827-8<sup>3</sup> — think Col. Jones made him a Whig dont know it . . . I opposed Abe in Politics when . . . he became Whig.'<sup>4</sup> Worst of all, laments Dennis, he 'allways Loved Hen Clay's Speeches I think was the Cause Mostly' of Lincoln's drifting away from Jacksonian Democracy.<sup>5</sup>

Certainly the Republican position in 1828-30 was supported by what Lincoln had experienced throughout his life — the necessity for means of communication, the worthlessness of the local currency, so uncertain in value that he never knew the purchasing power of his trifling wages.<sup>6</sup> Internal improvements

<sup>1</sup> Judge O. H. Smith says that 'stump speaking' began in Indiana about 1826. As an example of popular ignorance, and intolerance of what was considered extravagant statements by speakers, he relates that Judge John Test, a Representative in Congress from the eastern district of Indiana, told an audience that the speed of railway trains in England was thirty miles an hour. The crowd jeered and roared with laughter; and one cried out 'you are crazy, or do you think we are fools; a man could not live a moment [when going] at that speed.' For his assertion, Judge Test was defeated for reelection. Smith, 80.

<sup>2</sup> Boone was, perhaps, the most active politician in Southwestern Indiana. He was twice Lieutenant Governor and was six times elected to Congress. A life of this pioneer politician and legislator is now being written by Hon. John E. Iglehart of Evansville, Ind.

<sup>3</sup> Hanks's Charleston statement. Weik MSS. Whig is used for National Republican. But David Turnham says he was still a Democrat when he left Indiana. Turnham to Herndon, Sept. 29, 1866. Weik MSS.

Dennis Hanks, who declares twice in his Charleston statement that Lincoln turned 'Whig' in 1828-9, says in a letter to Herndon that he did not 'Turn Whig' until 'After He cum to Illinois aBout 1830.' Hanks to Herndon, March 12, 1866. Weik MSS.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.*; Hanks's Charleston statement. Weik MSS.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.*; Hanks to Herndon, March 12, 1866. Weik MSS.

<sup>6</sup> See Cockrum, 403-4. The only specie was cut coin. *Ib.* At Vincennes in 1818 Faux 'passed away my twenty dollar note of the rotten bank of Harmony, Pennsylvania, for five dollars only.' Faux: Thwaites, xi, 207, Oct. 30. Even in Cincinnati

and stable money meant something tangible to Abraham Lincoln. Then too the men he knew best and most respected, William Jones, David Turnham, William Wood, were National Republicans and ardent champions of Henry Clay, the brilliant leader of that party.

Whatever the cause, it appears to be reasonably certain that it was at this period that Lincoln cut loose from the political faith of his fathers.<sup>1</sup> He said little about it, however, at the time, as was the case twenty-four years later when he left the Whig party. With that strange mingling of caution, secretiveness and craft which so confounded his opponents and puzzled his supporters in after years, Lincoln, in 1828-30, kept to himself his changed or changing conviction and his purposes. Indeed, Elizabeth Crawford recalls that in the Adams-Jackson campaign of 1828 she heard Abraham singing a Democratic campaign jingle.<sup>2</sup>

But though he may still have hurraed for Old Hickory, the forces had been set in motion within his mind which revolutionized his political ideas and shaped his political career. When Abraham Lincoln left Indiana in 1830, he was a Whig at heart and ready to enlist, as he quickly did, under the banner of gallant, dashing 'Harry of the West.'

notes of the local banks were from thirty to forty per cent below those of the United States Bank; and outside the city they were practically worthless. *Ib.*, 171. Between Louisville and Vincennes in 1820 the difference in the value of bank notes was twenty-five per cent. Welby: Thwaites, xii, 270.

<sup>1</sup> It is worthy of note that all the Lincolns continued to be Democrats, none of them voting for Lincoln in 1860 or even enlisting in the Union Army. This, too, is true of the Hanks family, excepting only John Hanks, who became a Republican in 1860 and was later a Union soldier.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Crawford to Herndon, Feb. 21, 1866. Weik MSS.





